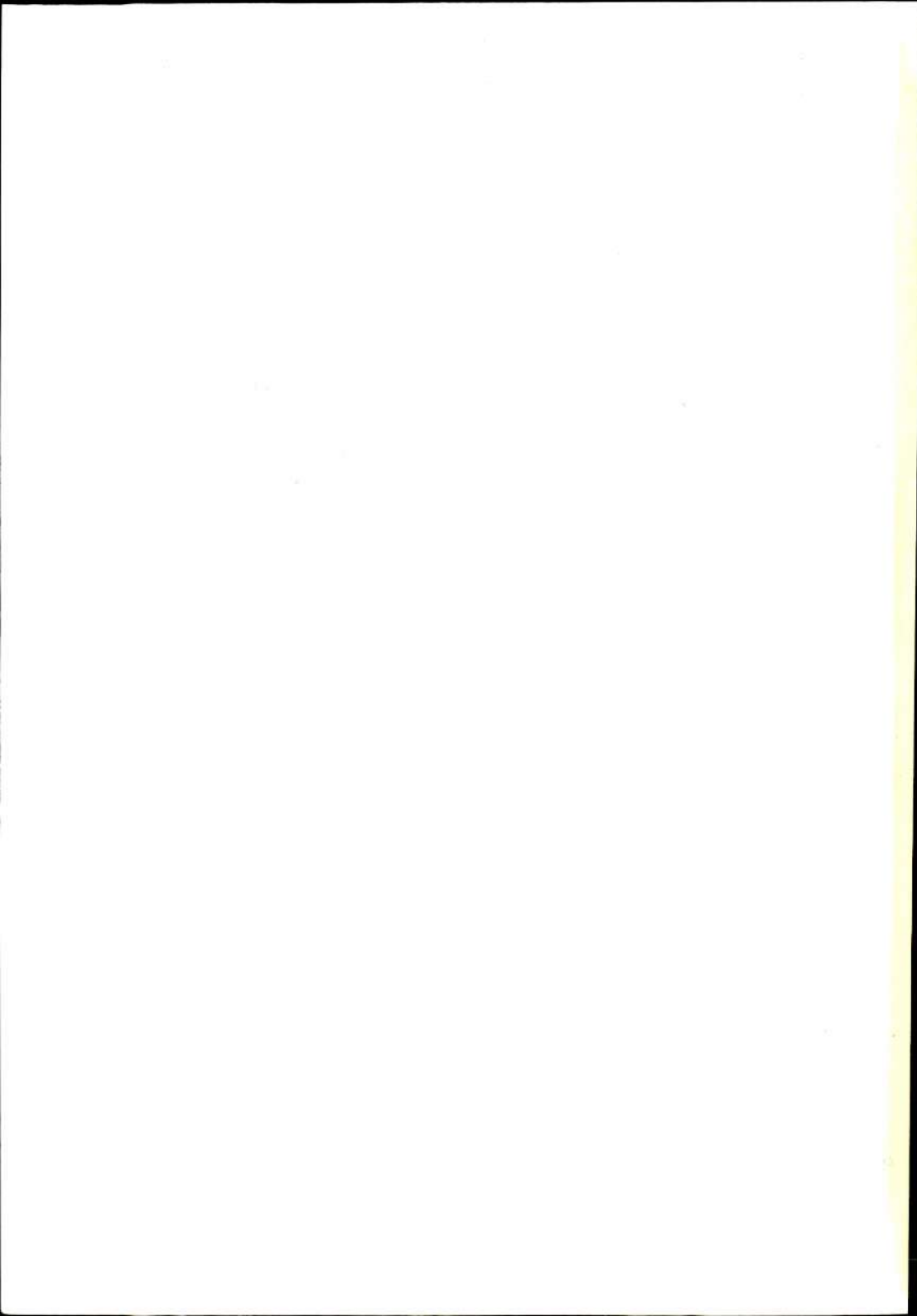


Islam ★ in Asia ★

**Perspectives for
Christian-Muslim
Encounter**

**Report of a consultation
sponsored by
the Lutheran World Federation
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Bangkok, June 11 - 15, 1991

Edited by J. Paul Rajashekar and H.S. Wilson

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(If, for the sake of a wider circulation, any of the LWF or WARC member churches, would like to have some of the relevant papers in this volume translated, we would encourage such an initiative. They should, however, inform us about it.)

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Preface

The papers contained in this volume were originally presented at a consultation held in Bangkok in June 1991. The meeting was jointly sponsored by the Lutheran World Federation and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, both based in Geneva, Switzerland. Both these organizations, through their programs, have been committed to fostering interreligious understanding and dialogue between different religious communities. The present venture is a symbol of ecumenical cooperation between these two major Protestant world communions in pursuing their commitment to "wider ecumenism".

The consultation brought together 26 Christian representatives, Protestant and Roman Catholic, knowledgeable about the world of Islam and with a deep commitment to promoting Christian-Muslim relations in their respective contexts. Because of the focus on Asia, most participants came from Asian countries, but some participants from other continents were included in order to enrich the deliberations.

In publishing these papers and the report of the consultation the sponsoring organizations hope that their constituent member churches, especially those in Asia, will be led to pay greater attention to the needs and concerns of their Muslim neighbors and that they will strive to establish a positive and healthy relationship with Muslims in mutual dialogue. We hope that this volume will serve as a resource and stimulus in that endeavor.

The editors wish to thank all participants for responding to their invitation; they are especially grateful to those who made a significant contribution to the meeting by presenting a paper. The assistance received from the Lutheran Mission in Thailand in organizing the meeting was much appreciated.

A special word of gratitude goes to Ms Corinna Ascher of the Lutheran World Federation who not only took care of the practical arrangements both before and during the consultation, but also edited and processed the manuscripts for publication. Without her able assistance the publication of this volume might have been very much delayed.

H. S. Wilson
World Alliance of Reformed
Churches

J. Paul Rajashekar
Lutheran World Federation

Introduction: Christian-Muslim Encounter in Asia

Understanding the Muslim world today

It is undeniable that during the past three decades the Muslim world featured rather prominently in the international media. In the period between the Arab-Israeli war of 1967 and the recent Gulf War in 1990-91, a series of events constantly focused our attention on the Muslim world. Among these were the 1973 oil embargo organized by the OPEC countries, the successful Iranian revolution in 1978, the *Mujahidin's* resistance to the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, incidents of terrorism, hostage taking and frequent calls for *jihād* against Western nations by certain militant Muslim groups in the Middle East, the controversy over the publication of the book *The Satanic Verses* by Salman Rushdie in 1989, and the imposition of the *shari'ah* in Pakistan in 1990. As this introduction is being written, there are new reports about violent clashes between Christians and Muslims in Egypt and Nigeria, and about increasing tensions between Islam-oriented and other states in the former Soviet Union. These incidents and developments together with the newly emerging political alliances between Islamic and Western nations in the post-Gulf War era will certainly continue to keep the spotlight on the Muslim world for a considerable length of time.

The current high level of interest in the Muslim world can partly be attributed to the economic interests of other nations and partly to the perceived threat of Islamic resurgence on the geopolitical stability. The revival of Islam has often accompanied a recovery of economic, political and military power by some Muslim nations. Non-Muslim nations, especially those in the West, have found this development somewhat unsettling when seen from the standpoint of their own economic and political interests. The anti-

Western rhetoric of certain Muslim nations and a spate of terrorist activities and hostage-taking practised by a small minority of militant Muslim groups during the 1980s have immensely contributed to the development of a negative image of Islam. In the minds of many non-Muslims resurgent Islam has come to symbolize terror and fanaticism. As a consequence, the Islamic faith, its glorious heritage, its social customs, its economic, political and legal views have often been distorted by Western media.

Many Muslims are deeply troubled by this distorted picture that the media are giving of their faith and practices. Seldom do the media lend a sympathetic ear to the concerns and sentiments voiced by Muslims. The Muslim world has indeed experienced profound changes and revival with astonishing rapidity and force. In a short time, many Muslim nations overcame the trauma of colonial subjugation and reorganized their societies by reformulating their Islamic identity and polity; at the same time they courageously faced the challenges of modernization. It seems that the changes that took several centuries in Christianity were for Muslims compressed into one generation. Obviously these changes have brought with them inevitable tensions and turmoil. For many Muslims it is not clear what the implications of the changes and the future direction of Muslim societies in a secularized world will be. Muslims are still in the process of coming to terms with these rapid changes and trying to redefine their contribution to and role in the modern world.

In fact, the revival of confessional Islam has intensified the struggle between traditionalists and modernists. At stake there are such crucial questions as "What is Islam?" or "What does it mean to be Muslim?" Whether Islam represents a set of principles to be interpreted so as to fit the modern situation, or a body of knowledge and regulations received from the past that must be faithfully adhered to is the subject of the struggle among Muslims. In other words, what aspects of Islam are immutable and what areas are open to reconstruction and reinter-

pretation in responding to new social and historical conditions are questions widely debated. The interpretation of the Qur'an, the application of the *shari'ah* and the role model of the Prophet are obviously some of the issues in this debate.

Contrary to popular perception, the Muslim world is not a monolithic entity, and despite the Islamic principle of *tawhid* and *ummah*, unity and community, Muslims are not free from cultural and ethnic divisions and national disputes. The division of Pakistan into two separate states in 1972 and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 illustrate the deep divisions within the Muslim world. The latter event has indeed shattered the earlier pan-Islamic dream of one extended Muslim family and of a united society that would transcend national boundaries. Furthermore, the new-found wealth and its distribution have also caused divisions within the Muslim world. Not all Muslim nations are awash with petrodollars and some of them rank among the least developed countries in the world. Another disturbing fact is that for the last two decades Muslims have been representing the largest percentage of refugees in the world, most of them fleeing from Islamic societies and seeking shelter in the Western world for economic and political reasons. The implications of this phenomenon for the future of Muslim societies have been widely discussed.

The diversity within the Islamic world is further reflected in modes of political governance. Muslim states have subscribed to a variety of systems ranging from secular states to clergy-run states, with military dictatorships, monarchies, and republics in between. All of them in some form or measure claim to be Islamic in orientation, but, as experiments in Iran and Pakistan have shown, the concept of an "Islamic state" is a nebulous one. Divisions in domestic politics in many Islamic nations often center around conflicting interpretations of the nature of a modern Islamic state. This want of clearness has indeed affected relations with non-Muslim nations and created dilemmas in matters of foreign policy. The traditional Muslim division of the world into mutually exclusive categories of *dar-al-Islam* (countries

where Islam rules), and *dar-al-harb* (countries at war with dar-al-Islam), as many Muslims realize, may no longer serve Muslim interests in an increasingly interdependent world. The question of relations with non-Muslim states has been a divisive issue among Muslims, between pragmatists and purists.

Today's Muslim world is of a tremendous variety and diversity. The revival of Islam in recent decades has not affected Muslim societies in the same way or to the same degree everywhere. When trying to understand the contemporary Islamic world one should be extremely cautious of the generalized and stereotyped images of Muslims drawn by certain quarters and not apply them to all Muslims everywhere. Not all Muslims are religious fanatics, "fundamentalists" or militants. Therefore, the contemporary significance of Islam and the issues and challenges Muslims pose to non-Muslims must be studied and assessed in relation to particular countries or contexts.

Islam in Asia

To a large extent non-Muslim perceptions of Islam and Muslim societies have been shaped by events in the Middle East, a region where the political situation is regarded by many as volatile. Historically, Islam was born on the Arabian soil, and its founder-prophet was an Arab. The language of the Qur'an and of worship in Islam is Arabic. In its early developments, Islam prospered under Arab Muslim rule and patronage. The most important centers of Islamic faith are located in the Arab world (Makkah, Madinah, and Jerusalem). But as the Islamic faith began to expand, it gradually encompassed Asia and Africa. Today, non-Arabs constitute the vast majority of the world's Muslims.

It is extremely difficult to come up with precise statistics on any religious community in the world, but based on various sources, it has been estimated that Muslims comprise about 19 percent of the world's population. Thus, about one out of every five people

in the world is a follower of Islam. The estimated mid-1991 figure is 1,022,960,000. About 16.3 per cent of the total Muslim population in the world are Arab Muslims.¹

The geographical distribution of Muslims is as follows: 68.3 per cent of all Muslims live in Asia (east of the Persian Gulf), 27.4 per cent in Africa, 4.3 per cent elsewhere. The demographically largest Muslim country, Indonesia, has 15 per cent of the world's Muslims. Three South Asian countries, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and India together have 30 per cent of the world's Muslims. The three South Asian countries and Indonesia together make up 45 per cent of the world's Muslims.

The sheer demographic concentration of Muslims in Asia warrants a far greater attention than it is usually accorded. Because of their geopolitical significance, events in the Arab world have understandably been given a disproportionate amount of attention, whereas the cultural richness and variety of the vast majority of Muslims in Asia has received less attention. Although in recent years the western focus has included countries like Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan, the tendency is still to see them in relation to the geopolitical equation in the Middle East. Islam in such diverse countries as India, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines has been of marginal interest only.

In this volume an attempt is made to focus attention on some of the neglected Muslim societies from Pakistan to the Philippines. The manifestations of Islam and Muslim life in South and Southeast Asia show considerable variety in transforming its Arab roots. In spreading to these regions, Islam inevitably had to adapt to and accommodate vastly different historical, cultural, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds. As a result, in these regions

¹ The statistics cited in this essay are provisional and have been compiled by Prof. R. E. Miller, University of Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, soon to be published in a book provisionally entitled *The Faith and Feeling of a Muslim Friend*. See appendix for details of the Muslim population in the world compiled by R. E. Miller.

Islam has been quite successful in becoming an indigenous religion by absorbing the social and cultural elements and *adaat* practices. For centuries, Muslim and non-Muslim societies have shared common cultural values enabling them to co-exist fairly peacefully in this region. Tensions about various socio-political issues have indeed erupted from time to time, especially in recent years, but they have often been precipitated by external forces, such as the policies of departing colonial owners, or revivalist and ideological influences from other contexts.

The resurgence of Islam in west Asian contexts has already begun to have an impact upon Muslims in South and Southeast Asia. Unfortunately, the call to reestablish the "pristine Islam" of Prophet Muhammad emanating from certain quarters of the Muslim world has been interpreted in Asia to mean a process of Arabization. Thus there are new initiatives, stimulated from the outside, to reverse the high level of inculturation achieved by Muslim societies in South and Southeast Asia. The relative autonomy of Muslim societies in different Asian countries is gradually being replaced by standards of orthodoxy and patterns of life-style borrowed from Saudi Arabia and Iran. In South Asia today, modern mosques are built with minarets; they imitate the Arab style and replace the indigenous styles used in earlier periods. The influence of some of the Gulf area oil states, in the form of substantial financial aid, exchange of labor, support of Muslim missionaries and the publication of religious texts and literature is gradually undermining the traditional cultural affinity that has prevailed between Muslims and non-Muslims. Many an Asian Muslim has begun to experience a certain measure of cultural alienation and a tremendous loss of freedom as a Muslim. In recent years, Muslim intellectuals in South Asia have begun to feel the oppressive dimension of resurgent Islam and some of them have been effectively silenced.

In those Asian countries where Muslims are in the majority, Islam has become a potent instrument in domestic politics. Although traditionally Islam has never separated religion from politics, law and society, today Muslim leaders increasingly tend

to use Islam for political ends. Islam is being more and more appropriated by incumbent governments and opposition movements alike (e.g., Pakistan, Malaysia) in order to retain or acquire power. Similarly, resistance movements have used Islam as a rallying point for political autonomy (the Philippines, Afghanistan). Where Muslims find themselves in the minority, their loyalty to their respective country is often questioned by the majority community (e.g., in India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar). In these contexts, Muslims have the delicate task of articulating their communal identity and the loyalty to their country. The threat of being absorbed by and assimilated into the values and ethos of the majority community is real in such contexts. Public display of one's faith sometimes provokes acts of retribution from the dominant community.

As the above cursory analysis shows, Muslim societies in Asia are beset with a myriad of problems and challenges which are peculiar to their respective contexts. In seeking to co-exist and establish positive relations with Muslims, non-Muslims in Asia must distinguish internal tensions in Asian Muslim societies from their external posture. Asian Muslims have greater awareness and experience of living within religiously and culturally pluralistic environments and would therefore welcome constructive and dialogical overtures undertaken by non-Muslim communities.

Christian-Muslim relations in Asia

This volume is the product of a consultation of Christian representatives from various churches, mostly from Asia, who are engaged in promoting Christian-Muslim relations. Thus the analysis of Muslim Asia is undertaken from a Christian standpoint. This may appear surprising, given the more than millenary history of conflicts between Christians and Muslims in the Mediterranean region and Europe. As is well known, Muslim bitterness towards Western colonialism has often been translated into an anti-Christian attitude. Notwithstanding the past conflicts, Christian-Muslim relations have been generally good and peaceful in most parts of Asia. This relationship must be further strengthened for

mutual benefit. Mutual interaction is facilitated by the fact that Muslims and Christians share an Abrahamic heritage and that in Asia they also share a cultural one.

Nonetheless, in Asia there are mutual fears and occasional tensions between the two communities. Christians certainly have far greater fears about Muslims than vice versa. This may be attributed to the fact that in every Asian country, except in the Philippines, Christians are in a demographic minority. In predominantly Muslim countries (such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia) Christians have reason to fear the potential implications on their faith and welfare of a resurgent Islam. The *shari'ah* being imposed in Pakistan, the *de facto* dominance of Malay Muslims (*bumiputra*) in Malaysia, are two instances where Christians are feeling increasingly insecure. The fear of being reduced to the status of a *dhimmi*, a second class citizen, is quite strong. In such situations Christians are eager to establish a dialogical relationship with the majority community in order to safeguard their religious freedom and minority rights.

In Indonesia, the largest Muslim country in the world, because of the state ideology of *pancasila*, the state has tried to promote dialogue and cooperation between the different religious communities. The emphasis on mutual tolerance and respect and the strong ethnic and linguistic bonds between Christians and Muslims have so far prevented serious conflicts in Indonesia. Both Christians and Muslims participate in each other's festivals and exchange greetings on religious days; this shows that a certain cordiality exists between the two communities. The example of Indonesia can be a positive influence on other parts of Asia.

The relationship between Muslims and Christians in those Asian countries where both communities are in the minority (India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar) may perhaps best be described as mutual indifference. As there are, however, common problems pertaining to their minority status, both communities sometimes support each other in the safeguarding of their religious freedom and their rights. In most of these countries, Muslims and

Christians have at times been subjected to the will and wish of the majority community despite the constitutional protection of minorities. The continuing controversy in Ayodhya in India about the proposal to build a Hindu temple on the site of an existing medieval mosque, the expulsion to Bangladesh of Muslims from Buddhist Myanmar by the military regime, the victimization of Muslims caught in a cross-fire in the ongoing conflict in Sri Lanka, are some notable examples. In these contexts, Christians have the opportunity to play a reconciling role by making sure that justice obtains and that rights are the same for all. The fact that in the Asian milieu both Christians and Muslims tend to be indifferent towards one another and sometimes ignorant of each other's concerns needs to be seriously addressed. There are not many Christians specialized in the study of Islam, and even fewer Muslims are engaged in the study of Christianity; this shows how great the need is in Asia for new initiatives and for building bridges between the two communities.

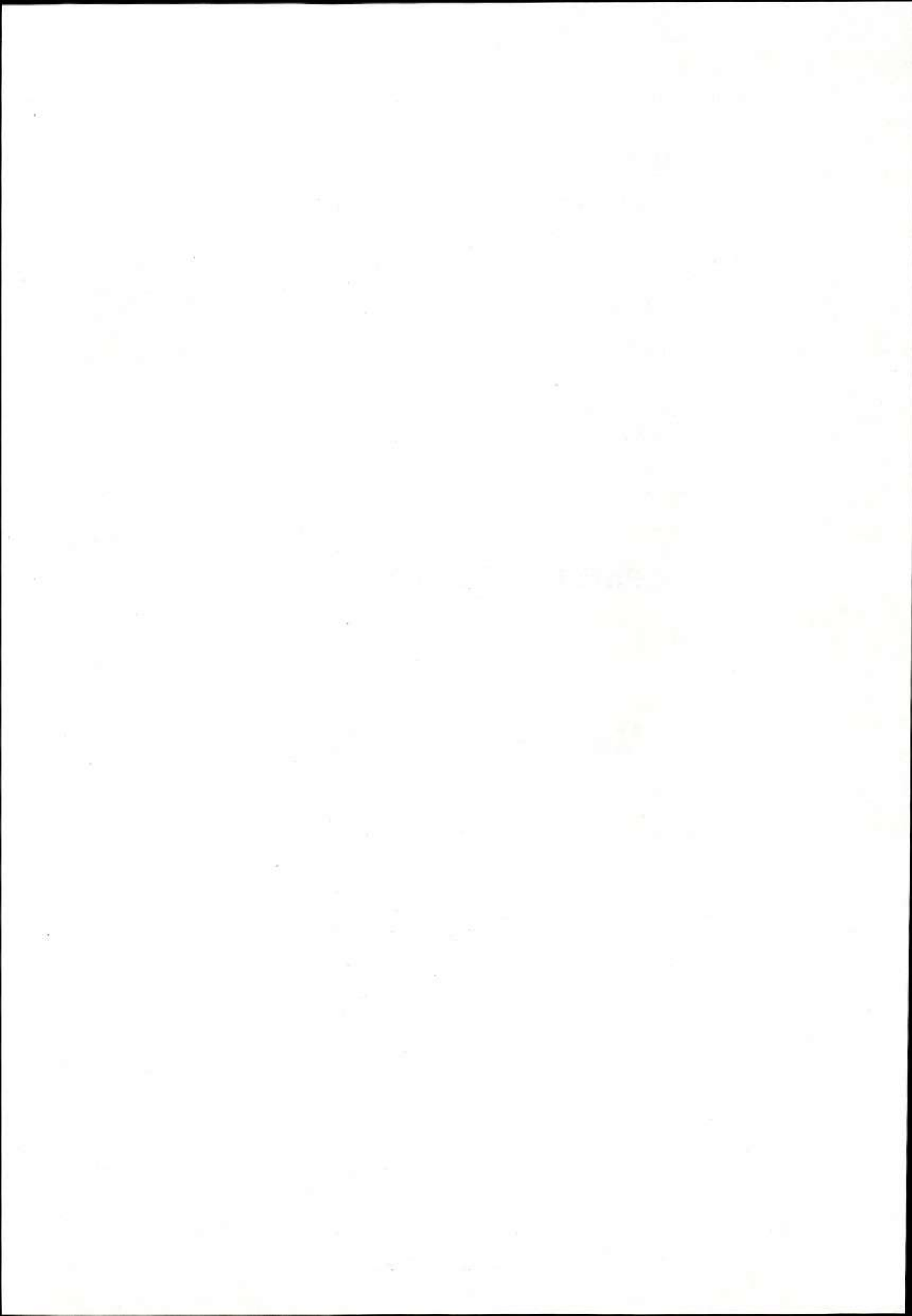
The most serious case of overt conflict between Christians and Muslims in South and Southeast Asia is probably the one in the Philippines. The roots of this conflict go back to the Spanish and American colonial rule and center on the yet unresolved issue of Muslim autonomy. Since 1946, the successive governments in the Philippines have ignored or forcefully put down any Muslim claims. The formation of the MNLF (Moro National Liberation Front), a Filipino Muslims resistance movement, has at times been involved in the kidnapping of Catholic nuns and Protestant missionaries in order to draw attention to Muslim grievances. The MNLF has received support from the OIC (Organization of Islamic Conference) and from individual Muslim states such as Libya. A peaceful solution of the question of autonomy for Filipino Muslims does require a sympathetic response from Filipino Christians. This situation shows that there is a need for dialogue, mutual understanding and cooperative efforts between Christians and Muslims in order to address issues of political rights and economic justice.

The essays in this volume explore Christian perceptions of Islam in general and of Muslim societies in particular in the Asian context. The reports on various countries compiled in this volume represent the perceptions of the authors in their own contexts. They are not based on academic studies or analysis. Their intent is to raise questions that affect the Christian and Muslim communities in the respective countries, to help build greater awareness and to promote mutual understanding. The deliberations during the meeting and the insights gained from the consultation are somewhat inadequately captured in the group report. Nevertheless, we present it to the churches and to the wider public with the hope that it will stimulate interest in and draw attention to the question of Christian-Muslim relations in Asia. For interested readers, three additional essays dealing with Christian-Muslim relations in Africa, the Middle East and Europe have been included in this volume. Needless to say, issues affecting Christian-Muslim relations on other continents have implications for relations within Asia and vice versa.

In conclusion, the primary objective of this publication is to help promote understanding between Christians and Muslims in Asia. Some Christian readers may find it a disappointment that the consultation which brought forth this book did not explicitly address the issue of Christian witness or evangelism. A Muslim reader may perhaps see this venture as a subtle form of Christian propaganda under the guise of dialogue and mutual understanding. Such feelings are understandable. Indeed, deeper theological, missiological and pastoral issues are inherent in any discussion about interreligious relationships. They must be addressed by each religious community with honesty and openness. That task can only be taken up in a climate of mutual trust and understanding. We hope that this volume is received as a contribution to creating a climate wherein an authentic engagement between Muslims and Christians can take place.

Part I

Main Presentations



Theological and Historical Rationality Behind Christian-Muslim Relations

I. Introduction

When I was invited by Dr Paul Rajashekar to give some thought to the consultation on "Islam in Asia", I suggested, without hesitation, that while we kept talking about dialogue with other religions, one of the tasks we had not achieved was that of initiating a discussion among Christians on the theology of dialogue itself, especially in the context of Islam. Dr Rajashekar immediately took up this challenge and asked me to work on it. I accepted this task and as I began working on it I realized how difficult this assignment actually was. What I am presenting here are some of the initial thoughts and the ground work that I have done in this context.

In order to carry out this assignment I have decided to focus on two areas which, I believe, are central concerns. In their order of priority they are: (1) to lay bare the character of the Western theological epistemology which we have inherited in Asia and to show its inability to meet the challenge of Christian-Muslim relations; and (2) to address the question of relations between religion and politics and to show how this issue is of central importance if we are to talk about a theological basis for Christian-Muslim relations.

I see both these concerns as representing a thoroughly theological approach. Others, however, might not agree with me. But then theology is itself a part of a dialogue process, and nobody has a prior claim to monopolize its total epistemological foundations, nor do they have the right to hegemonically assert that their epistemology is the sole criterion of the catholicity for the church. This monopolistic and hegemonic approach which was

adopted very early-on by the Jerusalem Church vis-à-vis the gentile Christians in Antioch (cf. Galatians 1-3), was fortunately defeated at the First Ecumenical Council in Jerusalem. The result of that intra-church dialogue was that we were all present in Bangkok, and more than that, that we are still pursuing the theological task. Had the result been otherwise, conferences such as the one in Bangkok would never have been possible.

My difficulty in preparing this theological paper was the realization that the attitude of the "judaizing Christians" of the Jerusalem Church is still present with us in a different form and continues to demand a similar homogenization on similar grounds of superiority. So, like the challenge that Paul posed to the Jerusalem Church, the theological task once again takes on a similar quality. This is especially true in the context of what we wanted to discuss at the Bangkok consultation (viz. Christian-Muslim relations in Asia). Just as the presence of gentile Christians posed a fundamental challenge to the complacency of the accepted theological approach of the day, so Islam theologically challenges today the complacent approach that we have adopted. Just as the prerequisite of Jewish history and Jewish Christianity proved insufficient for the Antiochian Christians and for Paul, Western Christian history and theology today are proving insufficient, and we are being asked to take Islam as a theological challenge rather than as the threat which Western Christianity has come to see it.

We read about this threat in the Church fathers, for instance in Thomas Aquinas' *Contra Gentiles*, and also in Luther's *On War Against the Turk*.¹ Even the anthem hymn of the Reformation, "A Mighty Fortress is our God", in its original last verse defines the devil against whom this fortress is an effective bulwark as being the Turks and thus Muslims. We have to undo all this historical baggage that we have inherited from Western Christianity

¹ See *Luther's Works: The Christian in Society* III, Vol. 46 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), pp. 161-205.

(which was indeed part of the Christians' political and existential fear), and be open to Islam and take up its challenge as a theological task for the church. It is at this point that a theological discourse on dialogue in general and on dialogue with Islam in particular should begin.

II. Western theology's epistemological roots: Impediment to dialogue with people of other faiths

Besides casting off the Western historical baggage when we look at dialogue there is another baggage, central in Western thinking, which needs to be dumped. It is one that is associated deeply with the concept and practice of dialogue: the Western philosophical rootedness in the Enlightenment and related traditions which provide epistemological foundations and pose three conceptual problems, which, I believe, impede the dialogue process rather than enhance it. One is the self-sufficiency of the thinking subject to determine the world in the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum*. The second is the Kantian emphasis on transcendent reason unimpeded by determination of location and identity. And the third is the liberal political theory which emphasizes the discrete, vying and entitative existence of people, reducing (if not totally negating) community and religious identities.

Given these three conceptual assumptions, dialogue is at best a futile activity and at worst the very negation of these foundational concepts. For the transcendent ego, reason and individual, without any of them having the necessity of locatedness, dialogue is nothing more than an attempt at convincing others to accept their transcendence and to give up the "prejudice" of location and biography. It is no wonder then that we have seen dialogue at the periphery of the theological task rather than as its very foundation. We have seen dialogue more in terms of something we do after our theology has been fully articulated. Or, we have tried to achieve, through dialogue, a transcendent religious ra-

tionality ("theology of religions") minimizing the identity of the people, their communal religious existence and the very reason for which dialogue is carried out in the first place (i.e., differences in content and method of perceiving divine-human, human-human and human-nature relations).

It is therefore not surprising that the word dialogue itself is so thoroughly misconstrued. The preposition *dia* (going through) has, in fact, been replaced by a numerical prefix *di* (two) by a purely mental process (*res cogitans*). And the word *logos* has changed from its original meaning of "principles and significant cohering realities" simply to mean "words exchanged". This is clearly evident from how we pose the opposite of *dialogue* by using *monologue*.

What we now mean by dialogue is words exchanged between two individuals. Even when we refer to two religious communities we in fact treat them as two individuals, reducing community identities to two isolated entities having a conversation. Rather than producing a genuine understanding, the result of such a dialogue can only end in a contractual relationship. Hence, as in politics, as a direct result of the liberal political theory, the only possibility of the common existence of two discrete, vying and isolated entities could be achieved through a "social contract"; through dialogue we want to make two discrete, vying and isolated entities achieve a "religious contract". In this sense dialogue is only a tool and not a foundational way of being in the world where the plurality of the human community is inbuilt.

But the character and goal of dialogue are different, just as the opposite of dialogue is other than monologue. In brief, I believe that dialogue is a foundational process of discourse in which the communities involved go through their own respective *logos* in order to come to some common understanding of certain social and political problems and issues. In achieving this common understanding, the very *logos* through which one has proceeded into dialogue in the first place itself undergoes changes. If this

definition of dialogue is accepted, then the opposite of *dialogue* is not *monologue* but *metalogue*, which means going beyond one's *logos*, or achieving a transcendent reason through escaping or overcoming the prejudices of one's own *logos* and locatedness.²

Because of this Enlightenment heritage of our theology, we have ended up with a *metalogical* position whenever we have entered into dialogue with people of other faiths, i.e., either looking for

-
- ² I am indebted to Hans-Georg Gadamer for this approach and its fundamental critique of the Enlightenment tradition through a reworking of the most profound articulation of this position from within the Western tradition itself. For Gadamer "the fundamental prejudice of the enlightenment is the prejudice against prejudice itself", he also demands "testing" and "questioning in conversation" as fundamental. (See *Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroad, 1975), pp. 239-240; and 325-341 (esp. pp. 330-331) respectively.) These two insights open us to dialogue on a different level which I am trying to develop here. But it must be pointed out that while Gadamer's discussion of horizon and the other outside this horizon is in the context of tradition, past and texts all seen from within the history of Western philosophy, I have broadened the concept to include those who represent the genuine other, outside the Western tradition itself, who have a different tradition, past and text than those which constitute the horizons in the West.

But even people like Jürgen Habermas and Paul Ricoeur have fought against this enlightenment tradition from different perspectives. For the former, only the importance of holding to one's prejudice, even if it is for a limited time, can lead to the necessity of "testing" and "argumentation of one's position" in a debate. This is variously articulated in his many works on the theme of communicative action, see especially *The Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984).

In Ricoeur this is most apparent in his emphasis on the existence of a transcendent linguistic code as only being virtual and not real, and that real language only takes place in the context of a given discourse; he thus emphasizes the role of the particular over the homogenized transcendent. See *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth, Texas: The Texas Christian University Press, 1976), esp. p. 9.

easy commonalities or looking for a transcendent way beyond the particularities of the dialogue partners. In both cases the *logos* of the dialogue partners, which constitutes their particular identity and locatedness, is negated. Thus we end up also negating the centrality of their particular *logos* as that which provides meaning and significance for a people, including Christians, in our dialogue. This is a metalogical position with which we end up in a dialogue as practised and understood in a traditional ecumenical way.

On the other hand, simply to discuss the content of different *logoi* (i.e., theology, doctrine, dogma, etc.) does not bring about any significant understanding, but rather causes a fracture impeding any possibility of understanding since it prevents conversation from even taking place. Therefore, dialogue should neither entail a loss of one's *logos* nor an arcane discussion of the content of the respective *logoi*. Rather dialogue is a quest for solutions to contemporary problems that human communities are facing and is related with their ethics as culled from the particularities of a given *logos* which acts as value-providing and analytical source. Hence, for dialogue to be genuine, one has to focus on concrete issues that have a highly existential quality for the communities involved. These must deal with the issues by going through the *logos* (dia-logue) of their dialogue partners.

In this process there is a genuine dialectic between the respective indicatives and imperatives. Imperatives challenge the ability of the given indicatives to meet the contemporary needs, while the indicatives demand a constant hermeneutic which stretches their accepted interpretation, thus giving them their deserved dynamism and preventing ossification. In this sense dialogue is essential, not merely as a tool for promoting understanding between people of different faiths, but also for the continuation of the fundamental theological task within the community itself. Thus one does not enter into dialogue after one has fully articulated and achieved a fixed certainty, but rather through dialogue one is constantly involved afresh in the theological task.

III. Western theological debates and their inability to meet the challenge of dialogue with people of other faiths

One of the fundamental issues in thinking theologically and historically about Christian-Muslim relations is therefore the character of the theological epistemology we decide to follow. Over the last hundred years or so classical theology has been dominated by its reactions to the epistemological shift brought about by the Enlightenment with its threefold commitment. First, to the Cartesian, egologically-moored thinking which has found some sources in the already existing hermeneutical shift in Luther's *sola scriptura*, *sola gratia*, and *sola fide*. Second, to the necessity to overcome one's inherited prejudices and to quest for an appeal to transcendent rationality. And finally, and this is a product of the first two, to the elimination of religion from the public discourse and its replacement by secularity.

In Friedrich Schleiermacher we have the first comprehensive apologetic to this Enlightenment tradition from the side of theology. This approach continues to be adopted by many renowned theologians who have been dubbed "liberal theologians". Countering this position was the neo-orthodoxy, heralded by Karl Barth, according to which there was no need to make an apologetic move towards the philosophical offsprings of the Enlightenment as a prerequisite for the theological task. Over the last fifty years or so the debate between these two positions has dominated the theological discourse whether it was taking place in Western academies or in ecumenical circles. There have been many voices who have criticized both these positions as being irrelevant outside the Western context, but they have not been paid their due attention.

The problem with these two ideal and typical positions and their various other manifestations was that what they felt was genuine plurality within their context, was no more than inner evolution of ideas. Here the challenge was to Christianity from within Christendom itself and not from some other religious worldview

or ethos. This was not so much a genuine plurality as it was a Freudian negation by the child of the parent. That a theological approach which had been developed in this context and which was answering particular questions from within this context was applied universally and was given the character of the only genuine way of doing theology, irrespective of the context, has been the real impediment for our theologizing in Asia. This theology acquired not only universal significance, but also a meta-theological position vis-à-vis all other theologies which were seen as heavily colored by the prejudice of their locatedness and by particular needs. Thus this theology was absolute in a scientific sense and therefore simply "theology", while the other theologies were relative and genitive in character, i.e., "theology of . . ."

I want to argue that these debates are in fact fundamentally against what we are considering here in the context of Christian-Muslim relations. My approach begins with other religions and their historical and epistemological starting point and looks for the implications of these starting points for our theology today. That the two theological positions mentioned above qualify as dialogue is beyond any doubt, whether one opts for a more apologetic approach (adopted by "liberals") or for a more polemical approach (adopted by neo-orthodoxy). Both positions assumed the presence of another *logos*, but from within the Western historical and scientifico-philosophical context. Neither of them ever really accepted an epistemological change when facing a dialogue partner from a totally different historical and scientifico-philosophical context. The fundamental reason was their commitment to the Western epistemological foundation (whether in its conservative mould or its more progressive mould) and its universal applicability. They were projecting their understanding as universally applicable for all times. Hence, even when they accepted other religions as having something to offer, the process was to use their own epistemological filters as universal determinants. My argument is that the theological epistemology based on taking as a dialogue partner someone holding a completely different worldview sets very different epistemological parameters, which are in fact restricting our theological debate within the context of the

liberal/neo-orthodox or any such version. This does not mean that the product of dialogue with those holding a different worldview is going to produce a singular position, but rather that the parameters of this product will be radically different from the ones produced from a single historical nexus.

Therefore dialogue is not just a concern for setting in motion relationships with people of other faiths, but, much more significantly, it is a challenge to the epistemological foundations upon which we have operated at a very fundamental level.

My point is that all theology is fundamentally a product of dialogue, a dialogue carried on simultaneously at various levels. One fundamental challenge that Liberation Theology has posed to traditional theology is that if the latter can be in dialogue with Aristotle, Plato, Hegel, Kant, etc., why can it not take Marx as its dialogue partner? The limitation of Liberation Theology, however, is that (like Gadamer) it wants to limit this dialogue to Western texts, Western tradition and Western history. The challenge that Islam poses to Christian theology and what we are doing here is therefore, in a sense, more radical than even Liberation Theology, because we are accepting a totally different text, a different history and a different tradition as the starting point of our dialogue. But this does not mean a loss of our own *logos*.

IV. Religion and politics: An Islamic challenge to Christian theology

In the contemporary world the existential challenge that Islam forces on Christian theology is the demand to look at the religious dimensions of social change and through it, on a more fundamental level, at the role of religion and politics. There is one personal comment I would like to make here. I have to carry on this dialogue within myself most of the time. This is based on the fact that I am a Pakistani Christian living in an overwhelmingly Islamic society, where Islam is growing more and more assertive, and the fact that I am the son of a Muslim

father and a Christian mother, both of whom decided to migrate to a country which, if not in a real sense, at least in a rhetorical sense, was made for the Muslims of the subcontinent. One of the challenges which not only I but all citizens of Pakistan face is the deep dialectical relation between religion and politics that Islam maintains. That I am looking at this relation positively is not some romantic knee-jerk reaction which makes me show favor to Islam, but rather a theological commitment I have come to and which has been generated by a study of the Christian heritage and the recent challenge posed by the third-world theologies.³ I am well aware of the difficulties which the combination of religion and politics have posed for minority communities both inside and outside my own Pakistani context, in countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Nigeria, Sudan, etc. But the answer to this challenge lies in a real dialogue with Islam and not in a flight to the Western epistemological commitment, to secularism and secular polity, whatever that really means today.⁴

However, one of the fundamental problems one frequently encounters in a dialogue situation is the tendency to compare the normatives (or ideals) of one's own faith with the practices of the other, and vice versa. This approach is adopted primarily to put down the other. Such an approach not only prohibits understanding and genuine conversation across religious boundaries, it also leads to the ossification of the interpretive possibilities of one's own sacred texts, thus limiting their fullest application in a given

³ For fuller details of my argument for seeing positively the relation between religion and politics as a necessary dialectic and as part of Christian heritage and theological necessity, see my "Religious Dimension of Social Change", *al-Mushir*, Vol. 28, Autumn 1986, No. 3, pp. 125-132.

⁴ For fuller details of the viability of the secular option and its implication for Christian-Muslim relations, see my "Islamic Polity and the Viability of the Secular Option", *al-Mushir*, Vol. 28, Winter 1986, No. 4, pp. 147-154.

contemporary situation. More than this, it leads to a hermeneutic which is always oriented towards past interpretations of these texts. Always looking to the past as a golden time limits the possibility of real guidance in the present and towards a just future.

On the other hand, scholarly approaches to Christian-Muslim relations have tended to take the "ideals" in both religions as a starting point and have, therefore, on the whole, neglected the actual historical realities. On its part, the attitude of Western scholarship towards Christian-Muslim relations has been dominated by a post-Enlightenment "rational" epistemology which seeks an "objective" and "prejudice-free" truth. Adherence to theologically pristine ideals, free from the vicissitudes of concrete history, however, can exist only in the mentally constructed laboratories of objectivity and not in actual human situations. Muslim scholarship, by contrast, has been inclined to be apologetic when dealing with the relationship between the two religious communities, showing a predisposition to point to some ideal reality in Islamic history. This approach is, in fact, either a revival of some imagined "golden age" (an *in illo tempore*) that never really existed in the present stated form, or an apocalyptic hope which remains divorced from reality and is not drawn into the present to stimulate religious activity in the polity. Thus, most of the dominant Western and Islamic approaches to some extent shun the present historical reality and are, therefore, unable to provide any guidance towards the resolution of human suffering and dislocation and to find a genuine theological answer.

For the last three centuries religious communities around the world have faced the challenge of having to prove their relevance to the contemporary human situation. Secularism, which was introduced because of particular historical contingencies in the West,⁵ has itself been pushed to the sidelines of history in the

⁵ Like the religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, especially the Thirty Years "Bloody War", which resulted in the "Document of Concord", drafted by Hugo Grotius, and the "Treaty of Westphalia" in 1648.

recent decades. This is because it did not prove to be the panacea it claimed to be. During the heyday of the modern (secular) era we have witnessed numerous wars causing massive destruction. We have witnessed the continuing escalation of tools with greater and greater destructive capacities and ironic military strategies such as "MAD" (Mutually Assured Destruction). We continue to see large gaps between the rich and the poor, within and between nations. We see the massive oppression and dislocation of people everywhere in the world.

Faced with these extreme levels of gross human suffering, we cannot afford to be optimistic and look for easy answers. Nor can we afford to remain passive, immobilized by our own pessimism and predictions of doom. We have neither the luxury of an easy secular solution nor of an easy religious option. But this does not mean that we can give up and live for ourselves, reducing religion to a private affair or a possession.

The answer to our current dilemma, I believe, still lies with religion. Not with a religion which distorts reality and promotes the status quo and the power of the powerful. Rather, it lies with a religion which is both prophetic and political. By political I do not mean the use of religion for the sake of manipulating people to promote the cause of the powerful. Instead, religion should be prophetic and political in that it strives for justice and seeks to make possible what seems impossible. This has to become the theological basis for our dialogue with Muslims. If we lose this dimension of theology and dialogue we end up negating the incarnation, the cross and the hope which is ours in the resurrection. Instead we end up with the heresy of docetism which still today continues to plague the church, and I think dialogue is becoming a victim of this docetism. Thus, the present parameters of dialogue as envisaged in the West mean nothing to those of us who live and breathe in an Islamic atmosphere where we are forced everyday to ask what the meaning of incarnation and God's reign is.

V. Conclusion

I believe that our famous "Muslim" poet has given us Christians the answer to how we are to develop and practise a theology that is dialogical through and through because it is based on justice.⁶

We will see,
It is certain that we too will see.
The day that has been promised,
The day that has been ordained for all times.
The day when the hard mountain of cruelty and oppression
Will explode and will be blown away like wisps of cotton.
The day when this earth will throb and quake
Under our feet, we who are deprived.
The day when over the heads of despots lightning
Will angrily flash.
When all the idols will be thrown out from this sacred world,
The sanctuary (*kaba*) of God.
We who just stand in lines of prayer,
We who are despised and destitute,
Rejected from the *haram* (the sacred sanctuary),
Will be made to sit on the throne.
The day when all the crowns will be tossed into the air,
And all the thrones will be destroyed.
That day, the only name that will remain
Will be that of Allah.
Who is both hidden and present,
The revealer and the revealed.
The cry "I am the truth" will rend the skies,
Which is I, you and all of us.
And sovereignty will belong to the people,
Which is I, you, and all of us.

(My translation of "We Will See", by Faiz Ahmed Faiz)

⁶ For fuller details of the role of justice in Christian-Muslim relations, see my "Religious Demand for Justice", *al-Mushir*, Vol. 32, Summer 1990, No. 2, pp. 48-57.

Resurgent Islam: Its Political Implications for Asia

"Islam on the March", "Islam Reasserts Itself", "Militant Islam", "Islamic Fundamentalism", "The New Wave of Islam", "Islamic Revolution", "Islamization".¹ Our mass media have presented us with a whole stream of newspaper and television accounts, magazine articles and paperback books describing the ferment taking place in today's Muslim world. In particular, the period between 1970 and 1990 has been characterized as a time of major transformation and reorientation, a time of dynamism, fundamentalism, and vigorous reaffirmation. However, the media spotlight on contemporary Islam has been selective in the images it reveals. Most Western observers have a powerful perception of the Muslim world as a "vast, turbulent, unsettled area . . . of precarious unease and violence—of strange, bearded men with burning eyes, hieratic figures in robes and turbans, of blood dripping from the stumps of amputated hands and from the striped backs of malefactors, and piles of stones barely concealing the battered bodies of adulterous couples."²

What has formed this perception? If we carefully examine the popular account of events in the Muslim world given by international media, we find a subtle theme played again and again: the threat imposed by Islam. This perceived threat is a product of the long and uneasy relationship between the Muslim Orient and

¹ The word "Islamization" has two meanings. It can refer to either the process of conversion or acceptance of Islam as a religion; or moves to incorporate Islamic elements and institutions in daily living. The latter is sometimes called "Islamicization", and is what I refer to here.

² G. H. Jansen, *Militant Islam* (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), p. 12.

the Christian Occident, a relationship characterized by fear and contempt on one side and hate and impotent envy, mingled with a little admiration, on the other.³ We must acknowledge this underlying perception if we are to understand "resurgent" Islam and its political implications. Equally important to acknowledge is the Muslim perception of threat posed by the West—a perception which springs from a history of colonial domination, the economic relationship between developed and developing countries, and an overall crisis of modernization. We will examine each of these aspects in detail, beginning with the events which catapulted Islam onto the world's centre stage.

The headline grabbers

Starting in the early 1970s, a string of events in the Muslim world captured international attention: the 1973 oil embargo organized by OPEC, the largely Muslim consortium of Oil Producing and Exporting Countries; the Iranian revolution and subsequent hostage-taking of Americans; the *Mujahidin* resistance to the Russian invasion of Afghanistan; and Pakistan's adoption of *Nizam-i Mustafa*. Although there are other significant events which have received world-wide attention, we will restrict our purview to these four, and will see how these events have been used to underlie the Western perception of a monolithic and dangerous Islam.

The oil embargo of 1973 came as an unexpected shock to the West. The developed world was suddenly at the mercy of its suppliers and its need: both industrial and domestic consumption were largely dependent upon Middle Eastern oil. The embargo introduced an unprecedented economic crisis as the price of oil shot sky-high, forcing the Western powers to acknowledge that the Arab countries were not simply client states but wielded considerable economic power of their own. In fact, the flow of petrodollars gave Arabs an enormous purchasing power. Arabs became

³ Jansen, *op. cit.*

owners of businesses, properties and other assets in America, Europe and elsewhere. For Muslims, the flow of wealth and the power that came with it were a long-awaited sign of Allah's pleasure and a confirmation that the community was following the right path.

The overthrow of twenty-five hundred years of Persian monarchy in the autumn of 1978 was dramatic enough; that it represented the downfall of one of America's closest allies in the region was even more shocking; but that it was perceived as drawing its inspiration from religion was, for the West, the most incredible part of the whole story. As Edward Mortimer recounts, "I did not pay serious attention to Islam as such until the autumn of 1978, when it suddenly became clear that what had seemed the strongest as well as the most pro-Western regime in the Muslim world, that of the Shah of Iran, was being brought to its knees by crowds of people shouting *Allahu akbar*."⁴ The occupation of the American embassy in Tehran and the holding hostage of a group of American citizens filled the West with fear, anger and a frustrating sense of impotence. The world's most developed country was appalled to discover that its most advanced technology was of little consequence when pitted against the will of a religiously motivated community. Moreover, as Adeed Dawisha points out,

The Ayatollah's takeover of power in Iran, perhaps the first mass-based, non-communist uprising this century, gave rise to fears in the West that neighbouring countries, most of whom were of vital economic and strategic importance to the Western world, might fall victim to the same forces that so radically changed the structure of Iran's domestic politics and the direction of its foreign policy.⁵

⁴ Edward Mortimer, *Faith and Power* (London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1982), p. 15.

⁵ Adeed Dawisha, "Islam in Foreign Policy: Some Methodological Issues" in *Islam in Foreign Policy*, ed. Adeed Dawisha (London: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 1.

For most of the Muslim world, however, a tremendous vitality was released from the movement. It was once again "Operation Badr" and the results were interpreted as a divine vindication of the religion of Islam.

The history of Afghanistan since its independence from Britain in 1919 has been volatile, torn by coups and power struggles. The attempts by successive rulers to introduce Western-oriented reforms were vigorously resisted by *mullahs* and tribal leaders opposed to the idea of change. The resistance became particularly marked when the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan seized power in April 1978. The counter-revolutionary parties, fired by the ideologies of *Ikhwan al-Muslimin* (the Muslim Brotherhood), *Hizb-i Islami* and the *Jama't-i Islami*, moved swiftly to declare *jihād* against what they described as the "atheist communist government" in Kabul. However, it was the march of eighty thousand Soviet troops into Afghanistan in December 1979 which drew international attention to the struggle of the resistance fighters. As the armed resistance dragged on, the Western press returned repeatedly to the idea that a holy war waged in the name of Islam could withstand even the might of a world super-power.

Another incident which drew the attention of the Western press was the establishment of what is known as *Nizam-i Mustafa*⁶ in Pakistan. On the 10th of February 1979, President Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq declared, "I am today formally announcing the introduction of the Islamic system in the country . . . May Allah bless our efforts!"⁷ The groundwork was thus laid for a far-reaching

6 Roughly translated as "system of the Prophet" or the "golden age of Muhammad's rule".

7 *Introduction of Islamic Laws: Address to the Nation* by President General Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq (Islamabad: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1979). Quoted in William L. Richter, "Pakistan" in *The Politics of Islamic Reassertion*, ed. Mohammed Ayoob (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1982), p. 143.

package of laws and a subsequent series of political, judicial, economic and cultural reforms. Although the process of implementation has progressed neither quickly nor smoothly, the Western press immediately focused on the fact that the incorporation of Islam into Pakistan's daily life meant that whipping, hanging, and the cutting-off of hands were to be awarded as punishments for specific crimes.

Our popular understanding of the ferment taking place in the Muslim world is largely a product of the international, Western-dominated media and reflects a fascination with the violent and dangerous. Rarely do these reports and descriptions refer to the basic political questions or economic realities confronting the Muslim world. Rather, Western writers tend to emphasize Islamic solidarity and spiritual unity, identifying religion as the key to understanding events such as those outlined above—a position which, as we shall see, is seriously questioned by a significant number of Muslim writers, among others.⁸

The basis of the perceived threat

Mohammed Ayoob notes that the Western perception of events in the Islamic world is based on centuries of political and military domination and reflects feelings of cultural and intellectual superiority by the West, as well as a fear of a Muslim political and military resurgence similar to that witnessed during the early Arab expansionist period and during the height of the Ottoman dominance of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.⁹ Within a hundred years of Muhammad's death, Islam had conquered most of the Christian lands in the Near East, the whole of North Africa and Spain, and had penetrated into France. The defeat of the Arabs by Charles Martel at Tours in 732 AD and his grandson Charlemagne's advance into northern Spain marked the limit of Islam's expansion into western Europe. Two hundred years

⁸ For example, Moin Shakir, Anwar Moazzam, Muhammad Asghar Khan, and Asgar Ali Engineer.

⁹ Mohammed Ayoob, "The Myth of the Monolith" in Ayoob, *op. cit.*

later, however, the Arabs conquered Sicily and briefly occupied parts of southern Italy. Although Muslim forces ultimately retreated in the west (where the last foothold in Spain was lost in 1492), they renewed their advance in the east. The crusaders from western Europe were expelled from the Levant and the Muslim Turks gradually overran what was left of the Byzantine Empire. They pressed on north and west, halting only at the gates of Vienna.¹⁰ Thus, for medieval Europeans, the Muslim was the pagan, the fanatical unbeliever who converted churches into mosques and physically threatened the very existence of Christendom. The memory of the bitter and bloody crusades of the twelfth century remains a vivid scar on Christian-Muslim relations, continuing to fuel antipathy in today's Middle East.

Another aspect of our popular perception of "resurgent Islam" is the tendency to think of Islam as a single entity, a monolithic force. The image of Islam as a single entity has been partly caused by Muslims themselves, for they claim that they are one, a point which we will return to later. This conception is far from accurate and hinders any real assessment of the current political ferment in the Muslim world. The rich diversity of modern Islamic experience bears powerful witness to the continuing ability of the Islamic message to inspire a variety of people in many different ways. As Moin Shakir points out, there is no one shape or one set form of "Islamic resurgence" because the political objectives and economic content varies from country to country.

In Iran, it is the basis of the struggle of the people against a barbarous monarch. In Pakistan, it is a tool for legitimizing the rule of the army junta which is backed by the rightist *Jama'at-e-Islami*. In Egypt, it is an effort to promote the Ikhwan's reactionary politics vis-à-vis Egypt's national revolution. In Turkey, the conservative party leaders want to use 'Islam' for petty partisan purposes to undermine the importance of the modernists. In Saudi Arabia, it is a plea for maintaining the status quo and for perpetuating the institution

¹⁰ Mortimer, *op. cit.*

of kingship. In Malaysia, it demands that 'Muslim standards of conduct be written into law'. In Algeria, fundamentalism means an attack on the hotels where alcohol is served. In India, it is the assertion of rightist politics of the *ulama*.¹¹

Clearly, we must be cautious when trying to uncover the "central essence" of Islamic resurgence not to overlook the national/regional dimension. In fact, looking for universal characteristics in the broad multinational context may be a mistake: at the very least it may be fruitless; at the most, misleading. In his analysis of the political role of Islam, Martin Kramer goes so far as to say that in studying the political situation in the modern Muslim world, the distinctive pattern which emerges is precisely the lack of pattern. The specific experiences of Muslim countries reflect a tremendous variety, each having a unique evolution bound to the special circumstances of their widely separated locales.¹²

Furthermore, Islam's diversity is not limited to its political manifestations but encompasses the wider economic, intellectual, theological, social and even ethnic spheres.¹³ Although there are a few common elements which unite the whole Muslim world, such as the Oneness of God, the prophethood of Muhammad, and the holiness of the Qur'an, the interpretation and living out of even these basic elements varies widely from country to country, place to place.

11 Moin Shakir, "Politics of Islamic Fundamentalism" in *Islam and Contemporary Muslim World*, ed. Anwar Muazzam (New Delhi: Light and Life Publishers, 1981), p. 12-13.

12 Martin Kramer, *Political Islam*. Quoted in John Obert Voll, *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1982), p. 352.

13 As Shakir notes, there is nothing in common between the Islam of the Ikhwan and Nasr or that of Mustafa Kemal and the Turkish *ulama*; nor between Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Mawlana Mawdudi. Moreover, the existence of nation-states cannot eliminate the deep-rooted prejudices of the Turks versus Arabs, Arabs versus Persians, Persians versus Kurds, Kurds versus Baluchis, etc. See Shakir, *op. cit.*

The Islamic perception of threat

One of the rallying cries which became popular among Muslims pressing for the creation of a Muslim homeland in the Indian subcontinent was the slogan "Islam in danger". I have already mentioned the Western perception of threat from Islam; the other half of the coin, however, is the Muslim perception of threat from the secular West. As we shall see, this stems largely from three factors: a history of colonial domination, economic exploitation in the context of third-world relations to more developed countries, and the confrontation between the norms and dictates of a traditional society and those of the modern world.

1. The effects of colonialism. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the direct intrusion of Western power into the Muslim world transformed vast parts of the *dar-ul-Islam* to colonial or semi-colonial status. Almost all of the Muslim world came under the domination of industrial capitalist powers: the Dutch, the British, the French, the Russians, the Italians. This meant that for the first time in their history, the majority of Muslims were faced with the dilemma of coming to terms with an alien—that is, non-Muslim—ruling power.

The presence of the colonizers in the Muslim world had a significant effect on the thinking and actions of the local Muslim population. Responses were complex and varied from country to country but, for the sake of analysis, we may divide Muslim reaction into two types. On one side are those Muslims who sought to modernize Islam by substituting Western models (democracy, separation of "church" and state, etc.) for existing social institutions. These modernists were, for the most part, the well-educated elite who had gained their education either abroad or through a transplanted system based on Western models.¹⁴ Sir

¹⁴ One of the main aims of instituting the Western education system in the colonies was to create a class of people who could be used in running the colonial administration—clerks, scribes, and other blue-collar personnel.

Sayyid Ahmad Khan, al-Din Afghani and Muhammad Iqbal, well known for their call to reconstruction of religious thinking, are three examples of this type of response. In opposition to the modernists are those Muslims who rejected the West totally, advocating a return to the "golden age of Islam"; that is, to the time of the Prophet and his fledgling Muslim community at Medina. This group, of which Hasan al-Banna of Egypt and Mawlana Mawdudi of Pakistan are good examples, was generally composed of or supported by the *ulama*, who stood to lose considerable power in the wake of modernization. In the traditional society, the *ulama* enjoyed numerous benefits: they controlled legislation since they had the authority to proclaim their own interpretation of the law and to decide how the law was to be applied in particular cases; they controlled the administration of justice since the judges came from the ranks of the *ulama*; they controlled education because they were the only educated people; and they controlled the practice of religion in daily life because this depended on the *shari'ah* of which they were the sole interpreters. It is not surprising that they wished to perpetuate the pre-modern society in which they wielded so much power.

Although the Western-educated native class in the colonies welcomed Westernization, the great mass of people remained indifferent. Even as a broader national awakening and struggle for independence gradually took hold, it was difficult to gain the involvement of the common people. Anti-colonial movements, based as they were on the desire on the part of various nationalist leaderships to attain autonomy of action in both domestic and international spheres, required a broader mass appeal if they were to succeed. Consequently, as Shakir notes, the educated class adopted a new language of tradition and religion to mobilize the illiterate masses. In other words, Western-educated leaders felt not only a need to modernize Islamic tradition but, ultimately, a need to traditionalize modernity in order to rally political strength. This created a situation ripe for revivalism as well as progressive reconstruction of religious thought, and gave rise to a

number of responses including pan-Islamism, Muslim nationalism and Islamicization.¹⁵

2. The context of third world - first world relations. To understand the modern political struggles of Muslim countries, as well as their perception of threat from the West, one cannot overlook the context of first world - third world relations. If we carefully examine who makes up the worldwide Muslim community, we find that the great majority are rural people dependent upon animal power to cultivate small plots of land which in many places they may not even own. According to Richard Weekes, the overall economic picture is one of a common poverty stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean.¹⁶ Muslims are in fact part of the more than two billion population of the third world. This means, among other things, that there is in their countries a massive divide between the wealthy and the poor. As in other developing countries, the bulk of the land's resources and wealth, as well as the benefits available within the society, are monopolized by at most ten percent of the population. The great mass of Muslims must struggle simply to provide the basic needs for themselves and their families. Although the balance is shifting for those countries with access to petroleum, in general the Muslim world is dependent upon the economic, social and political initiatives from the industrialized Western powers. The political assertion of Muslim countries is thus tied to the entire process of change within the third world. Like other regions in the developing world, Muslim countries tend to reject the West's political and cultural domination and feel a strong need to demonstrate autonomy of action from the traditionally hegemonic powers within the international system.

¹⁵ Mohammed Ayoob, "Conclusion: The Discernible Patterns" in Ayoob, *op. cit.*

¹⁶ *Muslim Peoples—A World Ethnographic Survey*, Richard Weekes, ed. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1978), p. xv.

3. The crisis of modernity. One of the problems shared by developing countries in the present century is that of adjustment to a Western way of life that is rapidly becoming the global way of life. As Ali Mazrui notes, "Whenever we complain about Muslim fundamentalism, let us remember that that is a term which describes a rebellious mood against being assimilated by this [Western] majority culture in the world."¹⁷ More than a mood of rebellion, however, I would suggest that the crisis of modernity is generally faced with fear. The greatest threat which Muslims perceive is that of losing their religion, identity and culture to a powerful, secularizing force.

It is a truism to say that we live in a changing world—but it is none the less true. Even in the Western world the physical conditions of life have probably changed more in the last century and a half than in the two millennia before. Change moves at a pace that accelerates with each generation and the term 'future shock' has recently been coined to describe the psychological reaction to it. Yet for the non-Western world the shock has been even greater. Not only has comparable physical change been compressed into a shorter period of time, but the sources and models of the change have been in an alien culture rather than in the spiritual, intellectual, and social developments native to their own traditions. In some respects the shock has been greatest for the Islamic world, since of all the major world religious traditions Islam has set the greatest store by worldly success and since the source of change has been a society to which for centuries the Muslim world had rightly considered itself superior.¹⁸

It is no exaggeration to say that the key to understanding revivalist and fundamentalist movements lies in understanding the interaction of the Islamic tradition with the ideas and institutions of modern society; that is, the response of Islam to moderniza-

¹⁷ Ali Mazrui, "The World of Islam: A Political Overview", *Journal, Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol. 11:2, p. 225.

¹⁸ William Shepard, *The Faith of a Modern Muslim Intellectual* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1982), p. 1.

tion and development. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, in his book *Islamic Life and Thought*, has discussed this point at some length. Defining secularism as those ideas and institutions of purely human origin (as opposed to those derived from an inspired source), he sees the spread of secularism as one of the biggest threats to the existence of Islam as a religious force. Unlike earlier "attacks" of secularizing civilizations (for example, the Greeks), Western society is materially more powerful than the Islamic world and politically and economically interested in overcoming it.¹⁹ Nasr sees the threat coming from all sides and affecting every aspect of Muslim existence: law, education, government and administration, architecture, city planning, interior decoration, diet, dress, and even religion itself.²⁰ Like many modern Muslims, the lightning rod of Nasr's anguish and fear is modern science.

The modern sciences . . . live in a world in which God is nowhere or, even if there, is irrelevant to the sciences. They are based on doubt. Having once and for all turned their back on the unifying principle of things, they seek to analyze and divide the contents of Nature to an ever greater degree, moving towards multiplicity and away from Unity. That is why, for the majority of Muslim students studying them, they tend to cause a dislocation with regard to the Islamic tradition.²¹

He concludes: "We see, therefore, that in nearly every domain of life the unitary principles of Islam are challenged by secular ideas, and the Islamic world is faced with the mortal danger of

¹⁹ Anwar Moazzam echoes this point when he notes that, unlike during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries when Greek philosophy challenged the Abbasid society, today's modern science challenges Muslim cultures as well as theology. See Anwar Moazzam, "Resurgence of Islam: Role of the State and the Peoples" in *Islam and Contemporary Muslim World*, ed. Anwar Moazzam (New Delhi: Light and Life Publishers, 1981).

²⁰ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Life and Thought* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981), pp. 11-12.

²¹ Nasr, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

'polytheism' or *shirk*, that is the setting up of various modern European ideas as gods alongside Allah."²²

What is the Muslim response to this perceived threat? At the political level it has generally been to lay claim to one's Islamic identity and to reassert Islamic solutions to modern problems.²³ Ayooob confirms that the general aversion to "imported political and economic ideologies" has hastened a return to Islam-based politics which are culturally indigenous rather than religion-oriented. Although each country is in many ways unique in its quest for or implementation of Islamic models, there are some common elements to that modern ferment which we have called "Islamic resurgence". One of the most obvious external manifestations is the donning of the *zayy shari'i*. When I was at McGill University in 1978-1979, I remember noticing the dramatic change of dress which took place among some of the young Iranian students in the months following the uprising in their country. Women who, with their jeans or short skirts had previously been indistinguishable from other young students, were suddenly wearing the *hijab*. For these young Iranians, dressing in a traditionally Islamic way was a means of expressing their solidarity with the revolution taking place in Iran, as well as an assertion of their own Islamic character. Other common manifestations of "resurgence" include a marked increase in the attendance at mosques and in the reading of the Qur'an; a concomitant increase in the membership in campus organizations, particularly the political ones like the *Jama'at-i Islami*; a mounting pressure on governments to establish the *shari'ah*, in other cases a re-examination of legal structures in the light of the Qur'an and the requirements of traditional Islamic law. But, as we shall see, although this gradual Islamization of symbols and policies represents a significant development, we must be cautious in reading too much into this modern reaffirmation.

²² *Ibid*, p. 14.

²³ As we have already seen, this is partly a reaction against a colonial past and takes place within the context of the larger third-world struggle.

Revival movements in Muslim history

In studying the modern political situation, it is important to identify the overall Islamic context. Anwar Moazzam assures us that if by Islamic resurgence we mean the strengthening of Islamic fundamentalism,²⁴ then the trend is not new.²⁵ Indeed, it would be a mistake to assume that Islamic revival is unique to the modern era, for Muslims have faced the challenge of changing conditions throughout their history. In particular, the threat of secularization can be traced back to the time of the Caliph Ali when the Kharijis in theory replaced the Caliphate by the *ummah*—a major step towards the secularization of the seat of power.²⁶ Later the Mu'tazilis, under Greek influence, extended

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- 24 In this paper we understand Islamic fundamentalism to stand for a return to the doctrines of Islam, their original intent and application, although Muslims themselves do not always agree on what that intent or application is. The Qur'an and the *sunnah*—the "fundamentals" are used as basic sources of guidance and are thought to provide the absolute standard for judging the "Islamicness" of society. These fundamentals have been used by both orthodox and modernists throughout Islamic history as the basis for criticizing the status quo and for programs of Islamic renewal. The difference is that the orthodox tend to include a large area of medieval theological authority within the definition of the fundamentals, while the modernists accept such post-Qur'an authorities on a selective basis only.
- 25 What is new, Moazzam asserts, is state-sponsored Islamic revival as a political and social system through partial implementation of the *shari'ah*, a point to which we will return later.
- 26 Mehdi Mozaffari points out that there is a distinction between secularization from internal sources and that which is initiated from without. The former includes secularizing efforts undertaken by Muslim groups which invoke Islam as their authority and try to divest the seats of authority and power of their sacred quality. That is, endeavoring to use Islam with the aim toward establishing a non-Islamic regime, often in the name of Islam. The Khariji, Mu'tazili, and modern movements in the Ottoman empire, Egypt, Persia, provide some examples. See Mehdi Mozaffari, "Islam and Civil Society" in *Islam: State and Society*, eds. Klaus Ferdinand and Mehdi Mozaffari (London: Curzon Press, 1988).

secularization beyond the seat of power to the seat of authority itself: the sacred was replaced by reason. Still later, the sacred nature of Islamic power was challenged by the sociological approach of Ibn Khaldun and others.

Another point which needs clarification is that what is popularly called "resurgence" in reference to Islam may be applied to some other communities as well; for example, Hindus in India, Zionists in Israel, or evangelical Christians in North America. The word "resurgence" does not apply strictly to Islam. Confining ourselves to the Islamic context, however, it is clear that reform movements have had a long history: Ibn Taymiyya, Sirhindi, Shah Wali Allah, revivalist movements in Malaysia and Indonesia—these are just some of those with which we are familiar. Yet these movements have not taken place in a vacuum, but represent a process of interaction and conflict, give and take, between the forces of adaptationism and fundamentalism.

The great dynamic: Adaptationism and fundamentalism

John Obert Voll, in his book *Islam—Continuity and Change in the Modern World*, traces the political evolution of the modern Muslim state in three phases. The first is the struggle for independence from direct or indirect European control, in which the most common expression of opposition was a growing sense of nationalism. In the affirmation of special local cultural identities which took place through political movements, Islam was an important component in mobilizing popular support. The second phase, the achievement of independence, switched the goals from anti-imperialism to national unity and development. The potential for tension now existed among nation, state and *ummah*, and sometimes led to political instability. In the third phase of political evolution, those states where a consensus on national goals or the nature of basic structures had not been achieved or where the institutions of the new states could not cope with the challenges posed by independence, faced a revolution or coup which overthrew the initial ruling group. This change in political power

introduced a reorientation of policies and ideology as well as a basic socio-political transformation through more radical and modern methods.

This process of political evolution and change is part of a larger cycle, a dynamic interaction between adaptationism and fundamentalism. As Islamic communities are created or expand, adaptation to local conditions is necessary. Historically, such adaptations have been the foundations for new social and political structures, and represent some of the great syntheses in the Islamic tradition. Along with the great successes of Islamic adaptationism, however, came a sense of the need to preserve the traditional and familiar. Thus a conservative style of Islamic action functions as a brake upon the changes which the adaptationists wanted to make. When the process of adaptation introduces too many compromises and the Islamic nature of the community is threatened, the process of renewal takes a fundamentalist form. The ferment presently taking place in the Muslim world is part of a broader cyclical evolution in which the forces of adaptation and change are opposed and ultimately balanced by conservative movements. As Voll rightly observes,

Modernizing adaptation and fundamentalist reaction provided the major vehicles for Islamic expression during the nineteenth century, and in the twentieth century, modernizing adaptation supported by a secularist individualism has become the dominant style under the influence of the special conditions of modernizing societies. However, as the compromises involved in these styles appeared to threaten the authentic Islamic nature of the community, fundamentalist pressures began to build, and because of factors like the oil boom of the 1970s, the reassertion of the fundamentalist style became an important force in the Islamic world.²⁷

²⁷ Voll, *op. cit.*, p. 355.

In the early part of the present century, the failure of more traditional approaches to meet the challenges of the modern era added to the appeal of a more adaptationist approach; that is, the secularist modernization programs for reform, often in the Western mold. Thus, in the first two-thirds of the twentieth century, the dominant Islamic style was a modernizing adaptationism promoted largely by the ruling class. Yet, at the same time, there continued among the majority a general conservatism of personal life which preserved a respect for the Islamic tradition. In fact, a section of the community—mainly the *ulama*—expressed their opposition, often in political terms, to the modernizing efforts being carried out. By the end of the 1960s, as people in modern societies were becoming convinced that the process of modernization had not solved the major problems of humanity, the pressure to secularize diminished, and the adaptationism of modern Muslim intellectuals—previously so attractive—had less and less impact on the development of Islamic thought and experience. The impetus became to redefine Islam in modern terms that recognized the comprehensive validity of the Islamic message in all aspects of life.

One factor which cannot be overlooked in studying the struggle between the forces of adaptation or modernization and those of fundamentalism is the role played by the *ulama*. A close analysis of the recent politics of countries like Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan, Indonesia, and others in Asia clearly shows that the opposition to modernization is always led by the *ulama*. As we have already mentioned,²⁸ the *ulama* stood to lose considerable power in the face of a broad modernization and Westernization. The *'alim* in the traditional society runs the *madrasahs* where traditional teaching is imparted, he acts as a judge in the community and solves the problems of his fellows. He occupies a central position and is the respected voice in the community. It is he who interprets the Qur'an and the traditions, but more importantly, it is the *'alim* who is the mediator between the larger society—the

²⁸ See above, p. 5.

rulers or government—and the illiterate individual. Thus, for example, he interprets the government's policies to the citizens who make up the villages and hamlets over which he has power. The *ulama's* support or lack of support for a particular program or reform is therefore multiplied by all those who depend upon them for interpretation and guidance. Moreover, it is the *ulama* who can alert their communities to threat, and sometimes mobilize them to action. It is not surprising then that the governments which have included the *ulama* in their administration and have not infringed upon their powers, have continued to rule; while those who spurn or try to lessen the power of the *ulama* have, as in the case of Afghanistan and Pakistan, quickly fallen.

Of all the modern reforms, education holds the biggest threat to the *ulama*. As the ordinary Muslim becomes more literate, an axe is struck to the very root of the obscurantism on which the *ulama* have, and continue to, thrive. Modern education teaches people to think for themselves, gives a greater importance to rationality and, for some, opens the door to an independent interpretation of religion and the sacred texts. The advent of modernization thus threatens the *ulama's* hold over the masses and consequently their hold over the ruling class—a change which endangers not only their power and prestige, but their very existence as well.

The uniqueness of the modern situation

Although revival and reform are a recurring theme in Muslim history, there are at least two things which make the modern situation unique. The first is that, as Nasr and others have pointed out,²⁹ the challenge of the modern West represents a powerful, external secularizing force which undermines not simply Islamic religious or philosophical thought, but the broader social and cultural aspects of Islam as well. Because of this, Muslims feel that their very identity is threatened. Anwar Moazzam defines this as a conflict between what he calls "cultural necessity"

²⁹ See above, p. 6.

and "cultural identity". The former represents what we have previously called the "adaptationist" standpoint; that is, the move towards intellectual and social modernization. When Islam was at the height of its power, as well as during its periods of regional supremacy, "cultural necessity" meant assuming change within the larger framework of a dominant Muslim world; that is, the paradigm was a Muslim one. During that period, Moazzam asserts, there was no conflict between cultural necessity and cultural identity. It was only later, as Islam entered a period of decline and eventual colonialization, that the conflict emerged.³⁰ Today, whether it be in countries where Islam is in the majority or in the minority, Muslims make a conscious effort to maintain their identity, particularly in their external lifestyle.

The emergence of the modern nation state

The second element unique to the modern situation is a far-reaching one: the replacement of the larger Muslim *ummah* with the nation state. The Arabic words used in most Islamic languages for nation—*millah* and *ummah*—have historically meant "people" or "community", and in most cases the community in question has been defined by religious criteria.³¹ The community to which Muslims belong, the *ummah* founded by Muhammad, has been throughout Islamic history the major focus of loyalty. Tribal groupings, dynastic states and other local organizations have been of great importance at different times in the past, but none provided the framework for an ideological orientation. The local and regional groups were viewed primarily within the broader context of the Islamic faith community.

Today, however, the modern idea of a nation state based on ethnic, linguistic or geographical criteria has cut across the notion of a larger community of believers. The strength of this institution is reflected in the territorial integrity which has persisted in the years since independence. We might recall that the

³⁰ Moazzam, *op. cit.*

³¹ Mortimer, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

boundaries of today's Muslim countries were often drawn by Western colonizers as balance of power compromises and have little relationship to ethnic, linguistic and cultural divisions. Yet, although the political units were artificial, virtually no state structure in the modern Muslim world has been superseded or changed.³² The emergence of individual nations of Muslims has heralded a shift in primary allegiance from the *ummah* to the country. The recent Gulf War provides evidence of this. Not only did one Muslim nation invade another sovereign Muslim country, Muslim governments from around the world contributed arms and manpower to fight against the Iraqi aggressors. Although the ideal of Islamic unity still arouses a superficial emotional appeal, for Muslims it has become more of a shared sentiment than an organizational basis for specific programs.

The seeking of political power for establishing a classical Islamic system started with the Hanbali/Ibn Taymiyya/Wahhabi version of Islam in Arabia during the last century. The reform movement of Abdul Wahhab preached a return and strict adherence to the fundamentals, and attempted to re-organize the state according to the example of the Prophet—an experiment which was only partially successful. Yet the experiment itself was significant because it provided a model for fledgling Muslim nations seeking to establish Islam as a viable political system. Another factor which gave appeal and strength to the place of the state as a political power was the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924. Although some Muslims had questioned the global authority of the Caliph, the institution itself was at least a superficial unifying factor for Muslims. With its abolition, even that semblance of unity was lost.

With the nation state emerging as the primary political unit in

³² This is largely because the existence of the state is reinforced by the twentieth-century global political context in which effective recognition is given not to religious communities or traditional groupings but to states.

the post-independence era, all Muslim political groups—whether representing majority or minority groups in their own countries—had to find some answer to the issue of the relationship between Islam and nationalism. As Edward Mortimer suggests:

Every Muslim state has somehow to define the role that Islam plays in it, and a modern Muslim state has either to choose between Islam and nationalism or to find some synthesis of the two. The 'politics of Islam' in the twentieth century is essentially a quest for solutions to these two problems.³³

In discussing the widely emerging nationalism, Pakistan—which was created in 1947 as a homeland for Muslims of the Indian sub-continent—provides a good example. No doubt its creation was, to a large measure, a culmination of the thinking of Indian Muslims such as Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, who opposed the National Congress and advocated autonomy for the Muslim community. His seminal ideas, which were more completely elaborated by Muhammad Iqbal and were given further practical form by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, culminated in the birth of Pakistan. In discussing the factors behind the emergence of Pakistan, Gilmartin lists the development of "communalism" within the context of colonial politics as the most significant.³⁴ He defines communalism as "a political style emphasizing the importance of religious 'community' in politics and combining an appeal to religious symbols with an attempt to mobilize support within the structure of colonial politics". Most historians have seen the emergence of a sense of nationality among many twentieth-century Muslims as rooted deeply in the communal political style which gained ascendancy during the pre-independence and independence period. The power of communalism lies in the fact that it links the religious identity of the individual directly to the larger cultural identity of the state, and helps resolve the question of defining a national identity.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

³⁴ Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 3.

In discussing the role of communalism, we must make reference to the situation of Muslims in those countries where they form only a minority presence. These minority Muslims are sometimes persecuted or, more subtly, are urged to join the "mainstream" by the majority population upon whom they are dependent. For them, their identity as Muslims is more deeply felt.

The political role of Islam

Trying to isolate the role "played by Islam" in the politics of Muslim countries means trying to define and describe the political interpretations of Islam proposed and acted on by Muslims in their societies. However, it is doubtful whether Islam as such can be considered a political factor in its own right. It is more accurate to consider it a mode of political expression. To return to our example of Pakistan, once independence was won and the new country began to struggle with what it means practically to be an Islamic state, Islam became an issue of conservative politics. As Moazzam notes, the role of Islam in Pakistan was such that it did not provide a commonly accepted concrete program of action but was, rather, a vaguely defined sentiment which, in all its different forms was common to virtually all Pakistanis.³⁵ By stressing symbolic measures of commitment to *shari'ah*, Zia sought Islamic legitimation for the state largely from sources outside Pakistani society. Though his program won the support of many *ulama* and of the *Jama'at-i Islami*, it lacked people's involvement and initiative, as the ambiguous impact of Zia's Islamization in the countryside bears witness.³⁶

Pakistan is not an isolated example. According to Moazzam, the developments in the Arab world—which are chiefly political—do not give evidence of Islam being an important factor. In fact, we could go so far as to say that politics determine the meaning of Islam, not vice versa. In other words, the contemporary Islamic "revival" is not a product exclusively of a mass urge, but is

³⁵ Moazzam, *op. cit.*

³⁶ Gilmartin, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

chiefly shaped and directed by the state.³⁷ In no country has "Islamization" been the result of a people's movement, nor has it enjoyed widespread popular support.³⁸ Even in Iran, the popular upsurge began not as a religious revolution but as a revolt against the Shah who came to be hated for his highly repressive rule. The regime of the Shah, characterized by tyranny and barbarism benefited not more than a few thousand families. His policies ruined the Iranian economy: oil earnings were used to buy sophisticated arms, "land reforms" left one third of the peasantry landless³⁹ and reduced Iran from a self-sufficient food producer to a country which had to import nearly sixty percent of its food needs. Any opposition was silenced by the Shah's notorious secret police, the SAVAK, and the denial of fundamental rights was widespread. Thus to think that Khomeini's Islam is the only instrument of the people's revolt against the Shah is a myth.⁴⁰

We have already seen that in the political arena, Islam has been used in a variety of ways for the achievement of widely differing objectives. Today's Muslim governments and politicians tend to use Islamic symbols more than ever before, although they are not uniform in the degree or way in which such language is used or

37 In discussing the role of Islam, Muslims and the state, Moazzam poses some interesting questions. The most central being whether or not Islamization can be affected through state-authority, or must by its very nature depend on the success of movements among the people.

38 This can be gauged in part by the fact that although there are presently approximately fifteen countries proclaiming Islam as the religion of the state, not a single one has been able to implement the *shari'ah* as the law of the state.

39 This is just part of the story. Of the two thirds who did own land, ninety percent cultivated lands with yields below subsistence level. Nearly half of the country's land was owned by absentee landlords, and the best land was taken over by the state for production of cash crops for export.

40 See Shakir, *op. cit.*, and Asgar Ali Engineer, *Islam and Revolution* (Delhi: Ajanta Publications, 1984).

interpreted. We may, however, broadly group the political manifestations of Islam into two categories. The first includes those manifestations of Islam which are anti-status quo in character, and are aimed at challenging or overthrowing existing regimes.⁴¹ The second encompasses those interpretations which seek to justify or preserve an existing political, social and economic order. As a tool of the ruling class, Islam is used to legitimize regimes, preserve the status quo, mobilize support, justify policy and disarm opposition. Therefore in understanding Islam as a political ideology, it is important first to clarify *whose* Islam one is speaking of.

The above brief analysis has shown that Islam as a religion plays only a minor role in the political life of various nations. In fact, Islam is often used either to maintain or to acquire power; hence it would be wrong to speak in terms of "resurgent" Islam. We noted that the view of Islam as a monolith is widespread: many revivalists return again and again to the theme "God is one, so Islam is one", and the Western mass media have capitalized on the image of "Islam on the March". Yet such a conception is more idealistic than actual. The ferment which we have noted in Islam is diverse, rising in response to different contextual realities in different regions. We must assert that there are no mass-movements of Muslims. The ferment which we notice in Muslim countries is only a manifestation of the attempt of Muslims to cope with the changing modern situation. In other words, in today's Muslim societies, Islam is not an independent and autonomous category, but only one of the many factors which shape the attitudes of the people. Although it would be wrong to underestimate the importance of religion, it would be equally absurd to regard it as central.

⁴¹ This broad division is not original; it has been suggested by a number of authors including Gorm Rye Olsen and Moin Shaker. See G. R. Olsen "Islam: What is its Political Significance?" in *Islam: State and Society*, eds. Klaus Ferdinand and Mehdi Mozaffari (London: Curzon Press, 1988); and Shaker, *op. cit.*

Islamic Resurgence and Asian Culture and Society

I. Introduction

Resurgence in religions is a universal phenomenon. There were times in the history of every religion when it needed to defend itself against hostile outside forces and internal corrosive factors threatening its existence. Also called "revivalism" or "reformism", religious resurgence has that universal dimension that all religions have manifested, the desire to return to the *illud tempus*, the primordial situation at the time of origin, "what took place 'in the beginning', *in principio*" (Eliade 1959: 92). Mircea Eliade, onetime chairman of the department of History of Religions at the University of Chicago and a well-known historian of religions, has defined as "religious nostalgia", when "man desires to recover active presence of the gods, he also desires to live in the world as it came from the Creator's hands, fresh, pure and strong. It is the nostalgia for the perfection of beginnings that chiefly explains the periodical return "*in illo tempore*" (*ibid.*).

The current Islamic resurgence is also an expression of that nostalgia. Although the scope of this paper is limited to the cultural and social dimensions of Islamic resurgence, a brief comment on its theological and historical background is necessary. Fazlur Rahman, the Pakistani Islamic scholar, traced the beginning of the decadence of Islam to the Sufi movement. He asserted that concerned religious thinkers of that time were showing a degree of fundamentalism in trying to purify Islam. In fact, the decay of or the turning away from pristine Islam—the Qur'an and the example of the Prophet Muhammad—can be traced back to even earlier times, to the end of the reign of the Rightful Caliphs, and even to the time right after the death of

the Prophet Muhammad (Rahman 1966: 237-289). Although the conservative *ulama* at first resisted the fundamentalists, who were the direct heirs of the pre-modernist reform movements, by the eighteenth and nineteenth century, even the conservatives recognized the importance of the purification appeal, mainly because of the dangers for the Muslims and Islam from the Westernization process brought about by the colonial powers (*ibid.*: 274). By the end of the nineteenth century, partly activist and partly intellectualist groups emerged, as a reaction to Westernism and Westernization. This was accompanied by the desire of a few powerful intellectuals to struggle against the destructive influence of the *sufis* and of other corrosive factors in Islam.

This reaction to Westernism and Westernization—the process that inevitably was (and is) a by-product of colonization by the Western powers—brought forth Muslim intellectuals such as Muhammad Abduh and Sayyid Ahmad Khan. Their efforts were to shape and reinterpret Islam along scientific lines, to withstand the corrupting—because un-Islamic—tendencies of Westernization. Of course, there were the fundamentalists who, opposed to Abduh and Ahmad Khan, insisted on the literal interpretation of the Qur'an and the *hadith* and strongly urged that Muslims return to the pristine Islam of the seventh century. They were heirs to the earlier revival movements in Islamic history—heirs, for example, to the Wahhabi movement in Arabia and to the Indian reform movements in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The activist nature of these revival movements was expressed much more visibly in their often emotional tendency to enforce (using violence at times) what they believed to be the right or correct interpretation of the Qur'an and the *hadith* or *sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad.

The recent sustained resurgence of Islam has caught the attention of the world. The brief historical reference above is to show that Islamic resurgence is part of the continuing Islamization in Arab lands and elsewhere as the natural result of the activities and desires of a living missionary religion. For, like other living

missionary religions, Islam has the impulse to spread, to win converts, or, at least, to influence as many people as possible. Like other living religions, Islam is also rooted in a culture: the Arabic. Islam, in its spread, brings along a certain well-defined culture. An interaction of cultures is the result. My concern in this paper is primarily to describe the impact of Islamic resurgence on Asian culture and social life.

II. Asian culture and society

I have tried to describe what Islamic resurgence is. It is also necessary to define what Asian culture and society are. But this is an impossible task. Asia is, of course, impossible to define, nor can one pinpoint what is Asian. Geographically, Asia is the region that stretches from India to China, Korea, Japan and Southeast Asia, but also the Middle East and Afghanistan, and even eastern Russia. Because of the many geographical divides which forced nations to develop cultures and societies independently of one another, Asia is not homogeneous. It is thus impossible to say there is one Asia, let alone one Asian culture and society.

Moreover, it is difficult to agree on a general definition of culture. Even the usual definition of culture is not enough: Culture is "the sum total of the attainments and activities of any specific period, race, or people, including their implements, handicrafts, agriculture, economics, music, art, religious beliefs, traditions, language, and story" (Funk and Wagnalls, *Standard Dictionary* 1974: 314). Social scientists would rather look at culture as a system, as in a process (Beals 1967: 5). Reviewing the many concepts of culture, especially Clyde Kluckhohn's, in *Mirror for Man*, the American social scientist, Clifford Geertz concludes:

The concept of culture I espouse . . . is essentially a semiotic one. Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an exceptional science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning (Geertz 1973: 5).

My treatment of culture will generally reflect that of Geertz, as I try to explicate how Asians express themselves religiously. Asian culture and social life are complex. Not only is Asia vast, but it is populated by a wide variety of peoples of different languages, religions and cultural forms. I am therefore limiting this discussion to Asian social and cultural life a microcosm, hoping thus to come up with a more or less holistic description of Asia.

Islam as a living religion is also a culture in itself. It has its own symbols, rituals, languages, etc. Historically, Islam has mainly been the expression of the Arabic culture (in its original and pristine form), and more recently of other cultures such as the Persian and Indian. One could say that Islam also reflects the cultural expression of countries or localities where it has found a home—Acehnese, Javanese or Ternatean, in Indonesia; Taosug, Maguindanao or Maranao, in the Philippines. I think it is instructive to limit myself to original Islam, although it is necessary to include also some of its other cultural expressions. Furthermore, this discussion will consider a differentiation of symbols and rituals, as opposed to religious essence, especially when looking at the implications of Islamic resurgence for non-Muslims in general and for Christians in particular.

This last point is important because the Muslims have a historic experience of interacting with other religious traditions. When Islam was introduced, for example, in many parts of Asia there were already healthy and growing religions, such as Hinduism and Buddhism, existing side by side with the primal-traditional animistic religions. In Indonesia and the Philippines, the Muslim interaction with other religious traditions brought about conflicts. When Islam was victorious, negative elements were purged out; or, where the native population successfully resisted the inroads of Islam, as in Hindu Bali or Christian Mindanao, an adaptation of Islam took place, and it served as a prop for an already existing structure. In that case religion was practised with only the trappings of Islam but without its essence. Many Asians are currently confronted with this problem of adaptation. It shows in

their zealously following the Islamic ethical prescriptions or in the trend towards nominal Islam, i.e., the continuation of pre-Islamic practices. Once again, the same syncretistic drift is apparent as the one that occurred during the Indian Emperor Akhbar's experiment in the seventeenth century.

Another, more important dimension is the comparison between the religious essence of Islam—defined as *tawhid* (cf. Muzaffar 1984: 22f.)—with the more fundamental and essential Christian beliefs. We may raise, for example, the following questions: Are the Muslim emphases on the *ummah*, the unity of God, and on the more basic human concerns, such as love, neighborly concern, peace and justice, not also the concerns of the Christian faith?

Should not Christians regard these concerns as fundamentally important for their lives in a community of faith? These questions, however, are beyond the scope of this paper. I shall now describe some of the Islamic manifestations in Asia.

III. Outward manifestations of the Islamic impact

The current resurgence of Islam has an immediate visible impact upon Asian culture and society.¹ An outward manifestation of this is the popularity of the *hijab* among Muslim women in Asian cities—particularly in Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Djakarta, Zamboanga, Marawi, and even in downtown Manila. These Muslim women are invariably wives or daughters of *hadjis* who have been to Mecca on a *hadj*, and whose religiosity has therefore become more pronounced. Sometimes they are relatives of laborers who have found employment in the Middle East; they may be domestic help or medical personnel, who have been employed in Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries and

¹ The terms "Islamic resurgence", "Islamic revival", and "Islamization" are used interchangeably in this paper, although the slight differences between them are recognized. For example, "resurgence" means a more aggressive and self-conscious stance vis-a-vis other religions than "revival". On the whole, however, the three terms imply new life and a basic return to what is fundamental Islam.

who have therefore adapted easily to this socio-religious symbol of Islam.

Islamic resurgence also shows in the more intense religiosity of Asian Muslims. In many Asian cities, even in areas that are not predominantly Islamic (such as those in the Metro Manila area, Surigao and Cagayan de Oro in the Philippines, Manado and Tomohon in North Sulawesi in Indonesia) there are new mosques which have been built according to Arabic models. Regular calls to prayer, often over loudspeakers from the Mosque, cannot escape the attention of the non-Muslims, making them very much aware of the presence of Islam. This Islamic presence inevitably leads to a growing number of Muslim converts from Christianity and from other religions. Very much part of this Islamic resurgence is the aggressive *dawah* activity of Asian Muslims; a number of people have embraced the Islamic faith because of this activity. This growing interest in Islam is manifest in the practice of rituals and/or use of symbols associated with Islam. Other outward manifestations of Islamic resurgence are: the founding of new *madrasahs*, the establishment of Islamic parties with political clout in some parts of Malaysia and the Philippines, and the readiness of so many to join movements for autonomy, independence and a more Islamic form of government (as in Malaysia, Aceh in Sumatra, and Mindanao in the southern Philippines).

A few case studies may highlight some of the manifestations of Islamic resurgence:

a) Marawi, Philippines. Marawi, a beautiful mountain city on the northern shores of Lake Lanao in Mindanao, changed its name to "Islamic City of Marawi", according to a resolution passed in 1984 by the City Council. The inhabitants of Marawi take pride in their city being Islamic. This action of the city government and the enthusiastic response of the people are a sign of the deep impact of the Islamic resurgence. Many observers maintain that this resurgence began shortly after the Second World War (cf. Gowing 1978: 165ff.). The popularity of the Moro

liberation struggle from 1969 up to the present has been described as the result of the Maranao Moros' (the natives of the region around Lake Lanao) deepening consciousness that they are Muslims. Moreover, the Moro wars during the Spanish era (from 1578 to 1898) and the Pax Americana, after that, which lasted until 1941, have also been described as part of an Islamization process among the Moros in Mindanao (cf. Majul 1973: 79ff.).

The improvement of peace and order in the Philippines and the promotion of American public education brought about the opening up of much of Mindanao, and resulted in the development of many parts of the island, including the Muslim areas. It also gave rise to an increased upward social mobility of the Muslim inhabitants, and this made it possible for many Moros to go to Mecca on a *hadj*. These moros, upon their return, showed a marked change—they had become more pious and zealous. Many Moros, like their Indonesian neighbors, stayed for some time in Mecca or Medinah, studying Islamic jurisprudence and other subjects; upon returning to Mindanao they became teachers in *mad-rasahs*. For their fellow Muslims, they became models of a deeper religiosity, promoting *dawah* in their area. The period of economic boom in the Middle East made it increasingly possible for many Moros to find employment in Middle-Eastern countries, or to go there as students sponsored by Islamic governments.

The Muslims in Marawi continue to be filled with pride about the success of the Khomeini revolution in Iran and the economic blessings of the Muslim petrodollars. This fact and the Islamic resurgence in Marawi helped the more "nationalist" Moro National Liberation Movement (MNLM) to become a strong political force; in 1987, the Islamic Reform Party won the local elections at the expense of the more traditional and secular Philippine (national) political parties.

Among the Muslims of Marawi, resurgent Islam translates into a form of ethnic pride. They identify with Muslims elsewhere, notably with those in Egypt, Pakistan and the Arab countries; they express this by wearing similar clothes and by using the Arabic language. This and the recently acquired affluence underscore the

religio-cultural differences with Christians. The already tense relations with Christian Filipinos are thereby exacerbated. Christian Filipinos think that Moros are more prone to violence and that they believe in a "culture of violence". Kidnappings, which are nowadays becoming more frequent in Marawi, Cotabato and other places, are often associated with the violent Moros.

In Marawi also, women wearing the *hijab* and men sporting a beard are some of the outward manifestations of Islam frequently to be seen in the streets. There are new mosques and well-attended *madrasahs* (some built quite recently); one even finds a flourishing *Jamia-tul al-Islamia*, founded by a well-respected Moro leader, where Arabic and other Islamic subjects are taught. The increasing use of Arabic in social and religious functions is another manifestation of Islamization. Even many secular schools invite an *ustadj* to hold invocations and give short speeches, often in Arabic. The Qur'an reading contest in Marawi (and in other cities in Mindanao), is an annual event; the winner then participates in the national reading contest in Manila. The national champion will then represent the Filipino Muslims at the international Qur'an reading contest in Kuala Lumpur.

Increasingly, the Moros of Marawi intersperse their *darangans* and *bayoks* (Maranao folk songs) with sprinklings of Arabic. Often, the traditional Muslim greeting is used, not only in public speeches, but also in ordinary encounters in the street. If Arabic is a sign of Islamicity, then it is a good measure of the progress of Islamization in Marawi, judging by the many shop signs and other advertisements in that language found all over the city. The government-run Mindanao State University in Marawi City not only offers many Islamic subjects, but also teaches the Arabic language. We should not underestimate the influence of the many *tableeghs* in the city and the resulting strong emphasis on the *dawah* movement which has led to the conversion of many Christian Filipinos, including a few priests from the Roman Catholic Church and the Philippine Independent Church.

Marawi is the capital of the province of Lanao del Sur and has over 100,000 inhabitants. Its population is predominantly Muslim, with less than 10 per cent Christians. There are many government offices the city, such as the lower *shari'ah* courts, a branch of the Philippine Amanah Bank and a branch of the Office for Muslim Affairs. In response to the Moros' demands for more autonomy and a bigger slice of the national economic pie, the government had begun to move these offices to Marawi already in the early seventies, at the height of the Mindanao civil war. The full implementation of the recently codified Philippine Muslim family and personal laws is still in the future. Filipino Muslim lawyers, though, have already been recognized by the Philippine Supreme Court.

Like the heavily government-subsidized Mindanao State University system, the agencies mentioned above have certainly had a profound influence, not only on the Moros of Marawi and Lanao del Sur, but also on those living in the nearby city of Iligan and in the province of Lanao del Norte.

b) Tomohon in eastern Indonesia is considered a Christian city. It is on Minahassa Peninsula, North Sulawesi (Celebes). North Sulawesi is predominantly Protestant, especially the cities of Manado and Tomohon. It is estimated that Protestants account for ninety-five per cent of the population. However, Muslims are increasingly present in Minahassa, and even around Tomohon. Tomohon is a beautiful mountain city where the Christian University and seminary, as well as the regional headquarters of the Christian Church in Minahassa (GMIM) are located. Near Tomohon, Minahassan Christian leaders will show one a tomb said to be that of Tuanku Imam Bonjol. He was one of the famous Minangkabau patriots who led his people against the Dutch in the Padri wars of 1821-1837. After his capture he was exiled to North Sulawesi where he was eventually buried. Attracted by his tomb, Muslims from Sumatra and from other Indonesian islands have lately settled nearby. The local Christians feel threatened by this growing colony of Muslims. They see it as being the center of influence for the Islamization

of the region.

Further to the east, near predominantly Muslim Ternate, is a thriving community of Christians and Muslims: Belang. This small town is *de facto* an Islamic center where one finds an old mosque, and a *madrasah*. Quite a number of young Muslims are sowing visible seeds of their Islamic education. As some Christian leaders have observed, many Muslim youths, especially those who have recently returned from Jakarta, take much pride in being Muslims and even hope to go to Mecca on a *hadj*.

Whether in Tomohon, Belang or on other islands in eastern Indonesia, concerned Christian leaders are complaining that the Indonesian government's resettlement policy is a deliberate tactic to Islamize the Christian areas. Even before independence, it was the Jakarta government's policy to resettle people from the densely populated areas of Java and Bali to the least populated islands in the east (cf. Pelzer 1945). It is this policy that brought many Javanese Muslims to settle on predominantly Christian islands in eastern Indonesia. Many Christians, though, did not see the more tolerant Javanese and Balinese (mostly Hindus) as a threat. Moreover, many of the Christian leaders see the government's ideology/philosophy of *pancasila* as a safeguard against the demands from more zealous or fanatic Muslims for a more Islamic state.

The last point is of some importance because many observers have pointed out that Islamization or resurgent Islam in Indonesia is also a means for deepening the Muslims' awareness of their religion. Endeavors are being made to improve education for Muslims and to help them better to practise their religion. The foreign Muslim teachers from Pakistan and other countries, the many Indonesian pilgrims returning from Mecca, the fellow citizens returning from their studies in the Middle East, all these have greatly helped to deepen the people's religious feelings. There are outward manifestations of this: more mosques and *madrasahs* are being built, Friday prayers are better attended, women wear the *hijab*, and men wear Pakistani garb and grow a

beard; the fast during Ramadan is being observed more strictly, and the number of pilgrimages to Mecca is increasing. The resulting religiosity puts pressure on the Muslim community and its non-Muslim neighbors, for instance, to prohibit the sale of pork, and to impose restrictions on women; other consequences are that the use of Arabic and the activities of religious teachers and missionaries are increasing, and that the *dawah* movement is spreading.

c) The Muslim minority in Cagayan de Oro, Philippines. A growing number of Maranao Muslims, mostly traders and their families from the neighboring provinces of Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte and from the city of Marawi, are to be seen in the rapidly expanding city of Cagayan de Oro, North Mindanao's commercial and industrial center. Its proximity to the Lanao provinces, home of the Maranao Muslims, makes it easier for a relatively large proportion of Muslims to live in the city. Peace and order are reigning in the city, a fact that makes Cagayan de Oro an ideal place for business. Indeed, the Maranao merchants are doing quite well in the retail trade. Many of them are also employed by various government agencies.

There are a number of reasons for this in-migration phenomenon: the breakdown of law and order in the troubled Muslim Lanao provinces, which has forced the Maranaos to leave for safer places, the natural attraction that an expanding urban center has for migrants from depressed rural communities, and the government's policy to give preference to the Muslim minority when it hires employees. Another factor is the time-tested business acumen of the Maranaos that has brought them all over Mindanao and beyond. Today, there are at least three Muslim communities in the city, each gathered near its mosque; the total number of Muslims is about 20,000 in a city with a population of over 300,000.

The presence of Muslims is very noticeable in the city. They are in the market places, in the schools, on the wharf, in the streets, in the shopping centers—distinctive, because of their way of

dress. Many have copied the attires of Muslims in the Middle East and Pakistan. The presence of Muslims is generally acknowledged. Where an ecumenical invocation is part of a public occasion, for example, the Muslims are often represented by their *ustadj*, who always says the prayers in Arabic. There is an association of *ulama* in the city; these *ulama* are responsible for all northern Mindanao. The call to prayer at dawn over the mosques' loudspeakers cannot go unnoticed and irritates the Christian neighbours.

For the Maranao Muslims, resurgent Islam translates into a form of ethnic pride. The wealth that many of them have recently acquired after working in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and in other Middle-Eastern countries underlines the religio-cultural differences between them and the Christian majority. The Christian Filipinos have developed negative attitudes towards the Moros in general and towards the Maranaos in particular, because they perceive them as being a violent people.

Moro (i.e., Muslim Filipino) literature, songs and dances, and other cultural forms do not seem to be making an impact on the Christian city. The Moro dances and decorative arts which may commonly be seen in Cagayan de Oro and elsewhere in the Philippines, are on the whole regarded as being part of an inter-cultural accommodation rather than as the direct result of the worldwide resurgence of Islam. More important, perhaps, for the Muslim Filipinos and the rest of the population in the southern Philippines is the generally favorable support given to the Muslim Filipino struggle for liberation by the Muslim Filipinos themselves.

The important question of whether the political support given to the Islamic Reform Party in Marawi City is an indication of the potential support that the more zealous Muslims are now receiving from the Muslim Filipino electorate is worth going into, but certainly beyond the scope of this paper.

Based on the above description of the outward manifestations of Islamic resurgence on the microcosmic level, we can make the

following general remarks. Firstly, the impact of resurgent Islam is minimal in most parts of Asia, especially in non-Islamic countries and even in those Islamic countries where a strong government sees resurgent Islam as being divisive and destructive for the unity of the nation. This is true, for example, of Indonesia, and, to a certain extent, also of Malaysia (cf. Muzaffar 1987). Even in Pakistan and Bangladesh there is a strong political opposition against a strict and conservative application of the *shari'ah* (see Safdar Mir 1984: 127-9). The rise of Hindu fundamentalism in India and of other, equally strong religious traditions sometimes occurs as a backlash against resurgent Islam. (See "Hindu Power" in *Newsweek*, May 27, 1991, pp. 12-16. This certainly applies also to the sudden strong trend of Christian fundamentalism and the charismatic movement in the Philippines and some parts of Indonesia.)

Secondly, the Asian countries seem to have reacted to the clout—whether real or imagined—of resurgent Islam by making certain concessions to their Muslim communities which have a more lasting impact on the inhabitants as a whole. This is shown, for example, in the reaction of the Philippine government to the Muslim Filipino rebellion in Mindanao. Because Libya, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Pakistan were giving support to the MNLF, the Marcos and Aquino governments instituted changes to accommodate the Muslim Filipinos. Among these changes were: the codification of the family and personal laws, the establishment of the *Amanah* banking system and of the *shari'ah* courts, and the inauguration of the autonomous region of Mindanao. In Malaysia, the Mahathir Muhammad government's response to the demands of the more zealous Muslim groups and to the challenge of the Islamic Party (PAS) amount to government-directed Islamization. The Suharto government in Indonesia has the *pancasila* to fall back on. But even there, the continuing clamor of many influential Muslim groups, especially those in the Aceh province, for the institution of the *shari'ah* and for more pronounced policies in favor of Islam have created problems for the Indonesian government and will continue to do so.

The influence of the worldwide resurgence of Islam upon Asian culture and society will become more intense in the coming years, primarily because of the following interacting factors: the role played by the Muslim traders and of trade in the region, the role of the educated elite (of secularly trained professionals and of those trained along religious lines), the role of the petrodollars, the continuing economic boom in the Middle East which attracts many workers from poor Asian countries, the roles played by the Khomeini revolution in Iran, the Qadhafi experiment in Libya, and Saddam Hussein's defiance of the United States and the Western powers in the recent Gulf War. The socio-psychological impact of these phenomena on Asian culture and society will certainly be felt for quite some time.

IV. The more permanent and deeper impact of resurgent Islam

The world-wide resurgence of Islam has certainly made a more permanent and deeper impact; this is not readily seen, as its outward manifestations are considered to be superficial by some observers (cf. Muzaffar 1984, pp. 22ff.). This more lasting impact could be the result of the following: education in a system that has become more Islamic, the *dawah* movement, the impact of the *shari'ah* or, at least, of the family and personal laws, and lastly, the implications of Islamization for women.

a) Education. Teachers are a very important part of society, for they are the effective transmitters of values that are essential for the survival of the community. Teachers are the principal actors in the educational process; they ensure that a society will survive in preserving and passing on from one generation to the next time-tested values, or so-called eternal values.

The role of the religious teachers in Islam is a crucial one, for in practice the *ulama* and the *ustadj* are more than jurists, they are also teachers and the keepers of the religious tradition. And in a religion which does not dichotomize the sacred from the secular these religious teachers largely determine the life of the community, the *ummah*. Education, therefore, is one of the principal

arenas where resurgent Islam is making itself felt. This is where the battle is being fought, i.e., to safeguard Islamic values and a more pristine Islam for the Muslims and at the same time to present Islam to the non-Muslims. Whether Muslims are in the majority or in a significant minority, they are pressurizing governments to pass pro-Muslim legislation for the improvement of the nations' curricula. Thus, the government becomes an instrument of Islamization. For many reasons, powerful Muslim groups have, in the past, pressured Asian governments to do their bidding.

On a non-governmental level, the activities of many Muslim groups to educate their Muslim constituents are evidence of resurgent Islam, e.g., the *tableegh* groups and the Muslim associations in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia, or, in some countries, the *dawah* people (cf. Muzaffar 1984; Safdar Mir 1984). Devout Muslims take it upon themselves to spread the teachings of Islam, often interpreting the Qur'an literally and imposing these interpretations on their fellow Muslims. Some of them have also been active in reaching out to Christians, and in Mindanao in the Philippines, many Christians, including a few priests from the Philippine Independent Church and the Roman Catholic Church have converted to Islam. This eagerness to explain the teachings of Islam to people of other faiths results frequently in a polemic against other religions.

The net effect of these educational efforts on Asian culture and society is one of deepening the Muslims' Islamic consciousness—the fanatic and conservative, as well as the progressive interpretation of Islam find their expression in Asia. Among Muslims in Asia the conflict between a modernized and progressive Islam, on the one hand, and a conservative and fanatic Islam, on the other, continues.

b) The "dawah" movement. There has been a conscious effort in Southeast Asia to spread Islam through *dawah*. Helped also by other factors—mainly, economic ones—the *dawah* movement has attracted converts from Christianity. In the Philippines, especially in Mindanao and the Metro Manila area, there are

thousands of converts and they are organized in an association called CONVISLAM, or Converts to Islam. Many articulate and aggressive Muslim "missionaries" who are members of this association are trying to win converts to Islam in the area around the Golden Mosque in Quiapo (Manila) or the streets of Iligan, Cagayan de Oro, Zamboanga and Cotabato in Mindanao.

c) In his book on Islam, Fazlur Rahman notes:

From the very beginning, a definite practical intent was part of the concept of Sharia: it is The Way, ordained by God wherein man is to conduct his life in order to realize the will of God (Rahman, *op. cit.*: 118).

Rahman continues by saying that *shari'ah* includes all behavior—spiritual, mental and physical—and that it comprehends both faith and practice.

In recent years, the worldwide resurgence of Islam, a carry-over of the last century's Islamic reform movements, has been greatly helped by the Ayatollah Khomeini's successful Iranian revolution and the economic clout of the oil-producing Muslim countries. The revivalist Islamic movements have put pressure on the governments of Muslim countries and of those with sizable Muslim minorities to legislate in favor of Muslims, or to adopt the *shari'ah* outright as the law of the land. The influence of this trend on Asian culture and society mainly shows in family relations and the position of women in society. As there is considerable opposition to this trend, even in Muslim Pakistan (cf. Safdar Mir, *op. cit.*), I will conclude with some remarks on this point.

The family as an institution is strong in Asia. The religions which were predominant in Asia before the coming of Islam—viz., Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism and the traditional religions (or animism)—placed the family at the center of Asian society. The recent worldwide resurgence of Islam has not changed the situation of the family. In fact, the return to the Qur'an and the *shari'ah* has emphasized the respect for the family as an institution, whereas the influence of the Western

colonizers and of Western culture on the family was perceived as being corruptive. Even secular writers have recognized the emphasis Islam has placed on the stability of the family (cf. Majul 1980: 129). The current trend to adopt the *shari'ah* as the basic law has met with much opposition because its proponents tend to interpret the Qur'an literally and to forget its essence and spirit. Three examples will suffice. The first concerns the definition of Islamic dress for women. In Southeast Asia, women traditionally chose to wear dresses that accentuated modesty and decency. Thus, the popularity of the *sarong* and *malong*. Since the *hijab* emphasizes modesty and decency, it is true to the Asian spirit. It is this exact copying of the Arabic model and the strict regulation that the *hijab* be worn even during hot and humid weather when the native dresses would be more comfortable that one could find fault with.

The second example is the law which rules that in financial matters the testimony of two women is necessary to equal the evidence given by one man. Even in Pakistan, women and concerned men have voiced doubts about this question of giving evidence. In Malaysia, the Aliran leader Muzaffar, quoting Rahman, has argued that this is not in the spirit of the Qur'an (Muzaffar 1987: 71). According to him, it is the importance of giving correct evidence that Muslims should emphasize, rather than the need for two female witnesses. In other parts of Southeast Asia, where the status and influence of women are respected, there is no such legal discrimination against women.

And thirdly, in some Asian countries a few groups of zealous Muslims want to limit the role of women to that of housekeeper and childminder. This puts pressure on women not to leave their homes unaccompanied, nor to find employment in order to help support the family. In an increasingly complex modern world this narrow interpretation of the role of women has come under attack. In many Muslim areas, including Pakistan and Muslim Mindanao, not only are women's rights respected (including the

right to gainful employment), but women have even been elected as members of parliament, to the office of governor, and even to that of prime minister.

Let me conclude with four general observations, the first being that the current worldwide resurgence of Islam is not a mass movement. It is not a movement from below, from the people; rather, it is directed from above.

Concerned Muslim intellectual leaders—both the religious and the secular, the fundamentalist and those who are modern in education and attitude—have, in the past already tried to slow down the decadence of Islam so that it might survive the onslaught of Western culture which was thought to have a corruptive influence. The present phenomenon of Islamization and Islamic resurgence is largely directed from above, with that same purpose of protecting Islam from the bad influence of the West—now symbolized mainly by the USA. The psychological reaction elicited by the siege of the United States' embassy in Teheran, instigated by the Ayatollah, is vivid proof of how a leader can kindle bad feelings in a people against a power that is perceived as an enemy of the Islamic faith.

The second is related to the first. On the community level there is generally a good measure of harmony and peace between Muslim and non-Muslim neighbors. Since in many Asian villages the local community is in fact an extended family where everybody is related, by blood or marriage, there is, on the whole, acceptance of one another. For example, there are marriages between young people from different religious communities. Muslim women are even allowed to marry non-Muslim men. Because of this peaceful and harmonious relationship, it is normal for Muslims to invite and be invited to community gatherings and festivals and to more private or family functions. In Mindanao and Indonesia, there were times in the past—especially during the Second World War and after—when Muslims and Christians side by side fought a common foe.

The third has to do with what has been referred to as Islamization or resurgence as a cultural necessity and vital for cultural identity (see Moazzam 1980: 22ff.). The Islamic response to Westernization was to try to preserve the cultural identity of the Muslims by returning to the Qur'an and the *hadith*. The history of the struggle between fundamentalists and conservatives, and between the fundamentalist/conservative and the modernist/secular leaders of Islam shows that in Islamic countries the pressures brought to bear on the powers that be to prop up the Muslimness of the nation—for example, in Malaysia, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Indonesia—were of a conflicting nature. In countries where there are strong Muslim minorities—such as in Aceh in Indonesia and on Mindanao in the Philippines—the same religio-political groups have a long history of exerting pressure on the governments, at times even resorting to violence in order to protect their identity as a people vis-a-vis the non-Muslim majority. This stressing of the Muslim cultural identity has recently been very pronounced in Mindanao, Aceh, and Western Malaysia, and also in Bangladesh and Pakistan. In Malaysia, for example, the concept of *bumiputra*, the sons of the soil, has been identified with the Malays, and the Malays are Muslims. Since the *bumiputra*, the favored "sons of the soil", were oppressed by the colonial masters in the past, the present government in Malaysia ensures that the *bumiputra* are given preference in law, and thus, get a bigger slice of the Malaysian economic cake. There is an effective and practical discrimination against the non-*bumiputra*, i.e., the non-Muslims, including the Christians. Although in the minority, the Moros of Mindanao have the same complaint. They, too, were discriminated against in the past by the Christian governments of Spain and North America, largely because of their desire and decision to preserve their freedom and to fight the colonial masters. In the Philippines, even after independence, they still feel that they are discriminated against and that the Christian majority is making a concerted effort to wipe them out because they are Muslims. This is why they have declared a *jihad*. The desire to preserve

the Muslim identity in Mindanao was the main reason for the Moro wars in the past and for the more recent Moro rebellion (see Gomez 1977 and Majul 1973).

At the same time, modern and secular Muslim intellectuals, some of them working alongside the fundamentalists, see the need for Islamic revival as a cultural necessity. They see the danger of the West's power, of its religion and culture encroaching on traditional Muslim culture and society. The present endeavors to strengthen Islamic governments by returning to the *shari'ah*, the Qur'an and the *hadith* are part of this desire to ward off anything that may threaten Islam and the Muslims. A better way of doing this is to take Islam seriously, and the return to the *illud tempus* of Islam is a logical step. Honest religious leaders and "false prophets", along with patriots and scoundrels, have unfortunately joined hands (although unwittingly) to make this a reality. So that today, some well-meaning religious scholars in Asia are bewailing the fact that there are Muslim governments or Muslim political parties or individual Muslim politicians who exploit this process of resurgence for their own selfish aims and interests rather than for the benefit of the whole religious community.

Finally, there are points of contact for Muslims with non-Muslims, especially with Christians. These provide opportunities for the traditionally friendly relations; as neighbors they can come together to make plans for a better and more peaceful community. For example, in spite of the civil war in Mindanao, Moro and Christian Filipinos made significant efforts to maintain dialogue. Thus, people from different religious groups were able to preserve harmonious relations within the community and at times even to protect one another from hostile armed groups. In the local community, where it is essential for neighbors to address common problems, as well as in the larger, national community, where the survival of the nation is at stake, concerned Asians have risen above the narrow domestic, religio-ethnic out-

look to find meaningful and practical solutions to pressing social and economic problems. There are many examples that could be given on this score, but I think the point has been discussed sufficiently in this paper.

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Part II

Reports from Some Asian Countries

1961

Report of the
Committee

Christian-Muslim Relations in Bangladesh

I. A brief history of Bangladesh

The population of Bangladesh is of mixed Tibeto-Mongolian and Dravido-Aryan stock. There are numerous ethnic groups in different parts of the country which are quite distinct in language, race, religion and customs. The Bengalis constitute 97 percent of the population. The different religions may be freely practised. Islam is the religion of the majority, with minorities of Hindus, Buddhists and Christians. In 1988, Islam was declared the state religion by the present government. Islam is a strong social force and, in combination with the indigenous, traditional culture of Bengal, has created a culture unique to Bangladesh. At present, the population of the country is 107,908,145 (1991 census), 85.4 percent of which are Muslims, 12 percent Hindus, 1 percent Buddhists and 0.3 percent Christians.

Islam came to Bangladesh around the eighth century. *Pirs* and *sufis* came from abroad with the highest of motives. They established themselves among the illiterate Hindu and Buddhist dwellers: theirs was not a religion of reading and discussion, nor did it resort to the Holy Book, but it made use of its teachers' charisma and the *pirs'* personal qualities and saintliness. A great many illiterate Muslims still follow the *pirs* and are largely ignorant of the teachings of the Qur'an and the *hadith*; for them memories of some long-dead mythical *pirs* are still alive.

Three main factors contributed to the growth of Islam in Bangladesh. (1) The receptivity of the local conquered peoples oppressed by the Brahmin caste. (2) The sincerity of the *pirs*, who were preaching a monotheistic religion for all: the quality and brotherhood of Islam. (3) Military conquest.

Three-hundred years of European domination created hostile feelings among the Muslims, the British administration having discriminated against them. In 1947, the British colonial rule came to an end, and Bangladesh, then East Pakistan, came into existence. In 1971, after the war of liberation, Bangladesh emerged as an independent sovereign state.

Today, there are various Islamic socio-political groups in Bangladesh. Some of them are sponsored and financed by foreign powers. There are 17 different Islamic communities, five movements and seven prominent parties, one of the strongest being the *Jama'at-i Islami*. Conflicts among these groups often create problems.

II. Christian-Muslim relations: Modes of dialogue

In general, the Muslims of Bangladesh are not aggressive. Everywhere in the Islamic states, the non-Muslims have always been regarded as protected communities. Nevertheless, when one tries to foster Christian-Muslim dialogue, one keeps encountering memories of certain past events which created bitterness and hostility on both sides. These sentiments make it difficult for people of different faiths to develop genuine friendships. Constant efforts are being made to overcome these feelings of hostility; with that in mind Christian-Muslim dialogue sessions and other get-togethers have been organized. Thus, a considerable change in attitude of both Christians and Muslims has been noticeable in recent years.

Since 1976, numerous attempts have been made in Bangladesh to establish mutual understanding between Muslims and Christians. The Christian churches—and especially the Roman Catholic Church—initiated different kinds of dialogue. The *dialogue of life*: Whether they belong to the majority or to a minority, it is the task of this country's citizens to carry on dialogue in daily life. There is much congenial interaction in peoples' everyday life as there is no cultural gap between the different religions. *Sharing religious experiences*: In 1976, the Roman Catholic Church in Bangladesh set up the Commission for Ecumenism

and Interreligious Dialogue. This commission fills one of the church's needs in organizing from time to time, in different parts of the country, sessions for sharing religious experiences.

Debates: Roman Catholics and members of other churches have been developing relations through debates, meetings, etc., all over the country. There are also other groups who work for mutual enrichment through dialogue. They do this through the publication of books, magazines, and leaflets.

III. Co-operation in projects of common concern

A common need is felt to shape the future together. The Christian churches and the NGOs work hand in hand on projects for improving the situation of human beings in such fields as child labor, women's affairs, education and wherever the need arises. Nevertheless, the good intentions of these organizations are sometimes misunderstood. Inherent in their activities is a certain danger that some groups will feel discriminated against or marginalized. Often, the reason for this is distorted propaganda. It is urgent to develop co-operation and pro-existence on the communal level in order to create mutual trust through a living dialogue. This process must be based on a great deal of honesty and sincerity. In the end, this will result in a greater awareness of the sensitivities and sufferings of others.

IV. Conclusion

Peaceful coexistence is still a reality in Bangladesh. People sincerely wish to live in peace. The dynamics of developments in Asia can only be fully understood from within. It is therefore essential that the churches in Asia take an active role in keeping up dialogue.

Muslim-Christian Relations in India

There are more Muslims in the Indian subcontinent than anywhere else in the world—India alone has over one hundred million followers of Islam.¹ To give an accurate picture of this group is difficult for, like any vast population, the Indian Muslim one is extremely diverse. Sectarian, regional, and political differences exist, but perhaps the most basic distinction is economic.

Doctors, chancellors, professors, lawyers, judges, chief ministers and presidents are among those at the highest income levels. With the status that these rich and influential few have attained through education, wealth and travel, the fact that they are Muslims is seldom noticed. In fact their dress, homes, food habits and life style have much in common with that of their rich Hindu neighbors. The vast majority of Muslims, on the other hand, are poor and illiterate. Among them are the daily-wage earners, agricultural laborers, rickshaw pullers, broom and *beedi* makers and others. The conditions in which these Muslims live are often pitiable. In the cities they are usually found in the most neglected and densely populated areas, often in the old, walled city region.

To a large extent, Islam in India reflects Islam in the Middle East. Nevertheless, Indian Islam also developed a distinct character of its own owing to the particular situation in which it was born and nurtured. Unlike the Middle East and North Africa, where Muslims quickly became the majority, in India, Muslims remained a minority even after they were well established in the subcontinent. Even as rulers Muslims were forced to interact with a community much larger than their own; plurality of religions was thus a fact of life, and Muslims had to learn to live

¹ This number, which is taken from the 1981 census report, will be revised when the 1991 figures are published.

peacefully with the people of the *Sanâtana Dharma*.² Because of this, Indian Muslims in some ways have more in common with the subcontinent's Hindus than with Middle Eastern Muslims. The cultural, social and even spiritual practices of the great majority share many elements with those of the neighboring Hindus, whether it be the veneration of saints in the *dargahs*, the observance of Muharrum in *ashur khanahs*, the pre- and post-wedding ceremonies, the endless exorcisms of *jinns*, or the rituals of healing and blessing. To begin to understand the complex interactions of Muslims, Hindus and Christians in India today, we need first to touch upon their collective past, starting with the arrival of Islam in the subcontinent.

Islam comes to India

It is generally accepted that, at least in South India, Islam was introduced primarily by Arab merchants who settled down in the Malabar and Coromondal coasts in the seventh, eighth and later centuries. It has also been conceded that, for the most part, Islam's spread in India was peaceful: through marriage or voluntary conversion because of certain special advantages gained by embracing Islam, or through the preaching of Muslim mystics. However, there is also some truth to the claim that Islam spread in India through conquest. In 711 AD, Muhammad ibn al-Qasim conquered the fortress of Daibul (or Debul) and, following the river Indus northwards to Multan, gradually brought the Sindh under Islamic rule. Large scale invasions followed in the eleventh century with Mahmud of Ghazna laying the foundation for the Indo-Turkish dynasties of northern India. The sultanates which rose and fell were finally replaced by the Mughal empire which reached its zenith during the time of Akbar in the early sixteenth century. The death of Emperor Aurangzeb in 1707 signaled the beginning of the end of Mughal power. A succession of weak rulers assured a hasty decline and, with the growth of

² This is the right term to designate the Indian multi-religious system. There is no one Hindu religious system as such. *Sanâtana Dharma* may be translated as "everlasting principles".

British domination, six centuries of Muslim rule were brought to a close.

As Aziz Ahmad has pointed out, the history of India from the time of the death of Aurangzeb to the day of India's independence from Great Britain is extremely complex.³ The British had arrived as traders in India in 1608 and by 1803 had become the sole rulers in Delhi; the role of the Mughal emperor was by then little more than a rubber stamp. This change had a wide effect on the psyche of the entire Indian Muslim population. Waking up to the reality of being a subjugated people, Muslims felt both shaken and impotent. The utter failure of the armed rebellion of 1857, which started as a mutiny, was the final straw. The possibilities for future rebellion were quashed and the Muslim community was completely disoriented and dispirited. In this spiritual and psychological vacuum, reformers such as Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Amir Ali and Muhammad Iqbal attempted to provide new direction, ultimately giving rise to movements such as modernism, conservatism, revivalism and Muslim nationalism.

Westernization and coping with change

One of the most powerful forces with which the defeated community had to come to terms was Westernization. Like Muslims elsewhere in the world, Indian Muslims had been profoundly shocked by the Western conquest and occupation of their country. When the British relinquished power in 1947, they left behind deeply westernized institutions in their language, way of life, ideology, science and culture. The impact of these values and institutions on Muslims was not uniform. For those who were scattered in tiny villages far from the cities there was, perhaps, no change whatsoever. The greatest effect was certainly on urban dwellers, particularly those who received their education in schools and colleges run by the British, or who were exposed to

³ Aziz Ahmad, *Modernism in India and Pakistan 1854-1964* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 13-14.

English literature, science and philosophy in its manifold varieties.

Muslim reaction to the process of Westernization was also quite varied. At one extreme were those Muslims who accepted—even eagerly sought after—all that was Western: its science, its methodology, its style of living as expressed in dress, food, and other habits. These Muslims even went so far as to attempt to reconcile the results of science with the conflicting truths of religion. Sayyid Ahmad Khan and the "Aligarh group" (as his followers later came to be known) belonged to this faction. On the other extreme were those Muslims who were hostile to Western influences and tried, whenever possible, to ignore them. A great number of conservative *ulama* belonged to this second group and were noted for their opposition to modern science and knowledge, and for their resistance to new ideas and change. This group regarded Western education as a great evil which endangered Islam. Such a stand, especially when embraced by the influential *ulama*, served to isolate the Muslim minority from the mainstream and had far-reaching consequences for the community as a whole.

The role of the *ulama* in shaping the lives and perceptions of the Muslim community, especially the poor majority, is powerful and pervasive. Held in great respect, they are the main decision makers of the community, although their influence is usually used to preserve the status quo. Most of the *ulama* are trained either in local *madrasahs* or in national Muslim institutions such as *Dar al-Ulum* in Deoband or *Nadwat al-Ulum* in Lucknow. The orientation of each of these educational centers is very different; consequently, the teachings of the *ulama* and the life of the people which they influence also differ. For example, *Dar al-Ulum* is quite opposed to the veneration of saints and to *sufi* practices in general, while the *madrasah* at Bareilly even encourages a popular living of Islam including visits to the *dargah* and the exorcism of *jinn*.

Another influence on the lives and perceptions of Muslims in India have been the various reform movements which have taken root in the subcontinent, starting with that of Shah Wali Allah (1704-1762). Wali Allah received his early education from his father who was not only a philosopher and theologian but also a mystic. While still a young man, he stayed in Makkah and Madinah for fourteen months and, upon returning to India in 1732, took upon himself the task of reforming the rapidly disintegrating Muslim community. His translation of the Qur'an into simple Persian made Islam more readily understood by ordinary Muslims, and gave a great push to Qur'anic studies in the Indian subcontinent.

Shah Wali's main concern was the purification of Islam; he preached a return to the pure Islam of the Qur'an and the *hadith*. Despite the fact that he was not a modernist himself, Wali Allah is known as the father of modernism since liberals as well as fundamentalists draw inspiration from his writings. He opened the flood gates of stagnating Muslim thought by declaring that the door of *ijtihad* was not closed and by denouncing *taqlid*. His attempts at reform were successfully continued by his sons Shah Abd al-Qadir and Abd al-Aziz and their disciples. Later on the movement came to be known as the *Waliullahi* or, mistakenly, the *Wahhabi* movement.

There have been several reform movements which have been directly influenced by Shah Wali Allah in one way or another. We have already mentioned Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan. This leading Muslim's main contribution to Indian Islam came at a difficult time, immediately after the 1857 revolt. He convinced the British that Muslims were not opposed to British rule. Likewise he encouraged his co-religionists to accept Western ideas and Western ways of life. The reform he preached included education of women and the reinterpretation of the Qur'an, and his new *Ilm al-Kalam* developed in several different directions. One of these was the conservative revivalism of Abu al-A'la Mawdudi, who opposed Western ideas but was not opposed to Western scientific progress. He defined Islam as a way of life in which the Qur'an

and *hadith* provide sufficient ideological direction for the community. His conservative reform movement, the *Jama'at-i Islami*, is a well-knit monolithic, almost totalitarian, religio-political organization. Even though Mawdudi himself migrated to Pakistan along with many of his followers, the *Jama'at* reorganized itself in India and today has a wide network, working quite successfully in intellectual circles and among college and university students. It's main aim is to try and inspire a stricter adherence to the Qur'an and the *sunnah* in an effort to establish the true religion (*iqamat-i Din*).

Another conservative group, the *Tabligh-i Jama'at*, was started by Muhammad Ilyas. Being a popular faith movement, it has invaded rural as well as urban areas and encourages Muslims to adhere strictly to the basic principles of Islam. Bands of six to ten persons, motivated by missionary zeal, travel from village to village imparting correct knowledge of Islam, especially the observance of Muslim obligations, in an effort to initiate a revival of Islam at the grassroot level.

Still another figure who has touched the minds and hearts of Indian Muslims is Mawlana Abu al-Kalam Azad, the freedom fighter who played a significant role in Indian politics, especially after partition. Adopting a position somewhat between Sir Sayyid and Mawdudi, Azad encouraged Western education and Western scientific development but was quite conservative in his theology. These leading figures in modern Muslim history have helped shape the thinking of India's Muslims, although it is questionable whether any of them has really succeeded in directing the lives of their people in very effective ways. As we will see below, a lack of visionary leadership continues to leave the Muslim community in India frustrated and despondent, prey to exploitation and the victims of communal violence.

Christian-Muslim relations

Before discussing modern Islam and Christian-Muslim relations in India, I will describe very briefly the history of Christianity and its outreach to Muslims in the subcontinent. Indian

Christianity is generally thought to date back to the time of St Thomas the Apostle who gave rise to a strong Christian community on the Malabar coast in the southern-most region of India. In the middle of the fourth century, Christian refugees from Persia, Syria and Mesopotamia arrived in the same region to escape the persecutions of the Persian Emperor of that time. Although the historical records of this time are scanty, it is clear that both groups continued to exist, the latter retaining ties with the Persian churches.

The arrival of European travelers and explorers, including Marco Polo (1293), the Franciscan friar John de Monte Corvino (1292-93), and John Marignolli (1348) ensured some interaction between foreign Christians and other groups in India. However, the arrival of Vasco da Gama in Calicut in 1498 signaled a new phase in Christian relations in India. The Portuguese were ambitious and determined to spread the Christian faith and religion. This went to the extreme of declaring a "holy war" against the "wicked enemies of Christ", inciting violence and alienating the local Christian population through attempts to westernize the age-old customs of the Malabar Christians. As the Portuguese increased in power, they ordered all Hindus in the port area of Goa to either become Christians or vacate the place. Temples were closed, properties confiscated, and a number of forced conversions reported.⁴ Yet the Muslim rulers remained tolerant and curious. Portuguese missionaries gained admission in the Mughal court, and Akbar permitted them to preach the gospel, make converts and build churches, as well as allowing the now-famous debates between Christian priests and Muslim *mullahs*.

Despite some notable exceptions such as St. Francis Xavier and Robert de Nobili, the foreign missionary efforts of this period were steeped in polemics and tinged with political pressures. It is not surprising then that the net result of western Christianity's

⁴ John B. Chethimattam, *Dialogue in Indian Tradition* (Bangalore: Dharmaram College, 1969), pp. 132-135.

encounter with India was rather negative. While succeeding in creating a few pockets of Christianity like Goa, they closed many avenues of religious encounter with the rest of the Indian population.

From the beginning of its existence in India, the British raj had adopted a non-interference policy with respect to the religious matters of the natives. The evangelical revival in Britain in the early nineteenth century, however, caused a high tide in the missionary movement which no government machinery could easily arrest. Waves of men and women hit the shores of newly acquired colonies, fired with zeal for the conversion of "pagans" to the "true" faith. In 1806 Henry Martyn (1781-1812), the pioneer missionary to Muslims in India landed in Calcutta and was soon followed by others eager to "burn out for the Lord". These evangelical Christians were well-prepared for the task of witness and conversion, having mastery over the language and a good grasp of the religion and cultural background of the people.

Their bold preaching was largely unsuccessful in terms of conversion, but the missionary activity had a great effect on the already reeling Muslim community. Muslims were quite familiar with their own preachers making disciples of people of other religions, but the prospect of being made disciples by another religious community was a new experience. As Binder rightly points out, the missionary movement spurred the romanticism towards the past which gave way to apologetic and polemics.⁵ Henry Martyn's tracts and the responses to them by Persian Muslims such as Mirza Ibrahim of Shiraz and Muhammad Reza of Handan gave rise to a series of public debates between missionary *padres* and Muslim *mullahs*, the most famous of which were those held in Agra in 1844 between the Revd C. G. Pfander and Mawlana Ali Hasan. Pfander exemplified the missionary mentality, and his approach to Islam gives us an idea of the types of attack directed at Muslims during this period. In

⁵ Leonard Binder, *Religion and Politics in Pakistan* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1961), pp. 10 ff.

his speeches and other writings, Pfander adopted the position that Christianity was the supreme true religion and Islam the false. This polemical attitude was strongly expressed in works such as *Mizan-al-Haqq* (The Balance of Truth) which contains a defense of Christianity and refutation of Islam. The pointed criticisms and cutting arguments of Christian preachers like Pfander and the atmosphere of polemics and apologetics which prevailed during this time had a decided influence on Indian Muslims. Public debates created an atmosphere of confrontation and animosity, resulting in the Muslim community being very suspicious of Christians—particularly missionaries. They felt that Christians were scheming to wipe out Islam from the Indian subcontinent.

In the hundred and fifty years since the Christian-Muslim debates of the colonial period, the church in India has shown very little concern for work among Muslims. One exception, however, are the para-church organizations such as "Every Home Crusade", "Operation Mobilization", "Call of Hope" and other proselytizing groups which aim at preaching directly to Muslims. These organizations employ such methods as distribution of tracts, gospels and Bibles; witnessing by converts from Islam; engaging in polemical debates, etc. Such efforts perpetuate the missionary style of evangelization and continue to fire suspicion and distrust among Muslims.

For the rest of the Indian church, surrounded by a vast Hindu majority, most efforts at outreach have targeted the Hindu population. It is not surprising, then, that there is not a single trained Islamicist in any of the Protestant seminaries in India, even though Islamic studies form part of the basic curriculum. The same situation existed within Catholic seminaries until approximately a decade ago when a number of clergy began to give serious attention to this neglected field, obtaining higher degrees in Islamic studies. The latter are today organized in the "Islamic Studies Association" which mainly aims to foster interest in

Islam and Muslim-Christian relations. The Managing Committee, which meets twice a year, coordinates the Association's activities from New Delhi, and it publishes a journal, *Salaam*.

A pioneer in the field of Christian-Muslim relations is the Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies which was founded in 1930 as a school for preparing missionaries to work among Muslims. Based in Hyderabad, it has today become a center for the study of Islam and Christian-Muslim relations with a clearly defined focus on a ministry of reconciliation. Its main task is to help the church in India—with interfaith cooperation—to become an instrument of mediation in situations of conflict, particularly between religious communities. Besides giving short and long courses in various seminaries and colleges, it organizes two residential courses of two weeks' duration. Both are intended to encourage leadership in Islam and interfaith relations in the church, and to foster harmony through dialogue. Its English quarterly, *The Bulletin*, publishes research articles on Islam and interfaith concerns, while the Urdu quarterly, *al-Basheer*, is meant mainly for Muslims and Urdu-speaking Christians.

Current issues and perceptions of threat

Having completed a brief historical overview, we are in a better position to understand the present interfaith situation in India. As we noted, the majority of the subcontinent's Muslims are both poor and backward. The community as a whole is still struggling to catch up with the Hindu presence in political, administrative and armed services. This is in part a consequence of the Muslim failure to take advantage of the educational, economical and occupational opportunities of the British era. Hindus did not face this problem. As pointed out above, during the six centuries of Muslim rule, Hindus never lost their numerical superiority but admirably played the subordinate role. Since their religion is not codified into a strictly defined system, Hindus were capable of adapting to new ideas without much furor or loss of identity—especially when they were morally or physically constrained to do so. Thus the Hindu majority was quick to take advantage of the

system of modern education and subsequent economic advantages ushered in by the British. In contrast, Muslims (with some noteworthy exceptions) opposed Western culture and education, and preferred to remain aloof from the modernization process. With the formation of Pakistan in 1947, and the subsequent violence which followed the partition, Muslims have been viewed with suspicion by the Hindu majority. The Muslims who chose to stay in India remain a threatened and psychologically alienated community. Three recent incidents illustrate the Muslim perception that the existence of Islam in India is precarious: the attempt to ban the Qur'an, the Shah Bano case, and the Babri Masjid-Ram Janambhoomi dispute.⁶

An attempt to ban the Qur'an

In early 1985, a writ petition was filed in the Calcutta High Court seeking to ban the Qur'an. The petitioners, whose identity was not widely known, argued that since the Qur'an describes the followers of other religions as *kafirs*, the Muslim sacred book is dangerous and threatens to exacerbate communal tensions in the country. Muslims were appalled. So was the popular press who responded sharply, the *Indian Express*, for example, calling the move "outrageous".⁷ The fact that the High Court did not immediately dismiss the petition was surprising; to some it was "diabolical". Lawyers pointed out that, in itself, the petition infringed upon section 153 of India's Criminal Procedure Code which outlaws acts prejudicial to the maintenance of harmony and those which promote enmity between different groups on the grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, etc. Government officials, lawyers and public opinion were, for the most part,

⁶ The following discussion is taken from my paper "Indian Muslims: A Haunted Minority", published in the April-June 1991 issue of Henry Martyn Institute's quarterly journal, *The Bulletin*, Vol. 10, No. 2.

⁷ "Outrageous Move", *Indian Express*, 13 May 1985, p. 1.

united in their condemnation of the act,⁸ and the petition was ultimately dismissed. Yet, for Muslims, the very fact that such a petition had come before the State High Court spoke volumes about the precarious state of Islam in India.

The Shah Bano case

Shah Bano had been married for forty-three years to Mohammad Ahmad Khan who, in 1975, married for the second time. She claims she was "driven out of her home"—although her husband did not divorce her—and began to receive two hundred rupees every month as maintenance. After two years, however, the payments stopped. Shah Bano then took the matter to court, petitioning for her husband to pay her an increased maintenance allowance of five hundred rupees per month. While the application was still pending, Khan divorced Shah Bano, paying the *mehr*⁹ which had been fixed at three thousand rupees at the time of their marriage. Meanwhile the local magistrate, taking into account the changed circumstances, ruled that a maintenance of twenty-five rupees a month was to be awarded. Shah Bano appealed this decision to the Madhya Pradesh High Court which subsequently ruled that the maintenance amount was to be raised to Rs. 179.20 per month. In response, Khan took the matter to the Supreme Court claiming that, according to Muslim personal law, he was not required to make any ongoing payments to his divorced wife. In April 1985, Y. V. Chandrachud and four other members of the Supreme Court upheld the High Court decision,

8 For example, West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu called the filing of the petition a "despicable act", while Asoke Sen, the Union Law Minister, stated his intent to implead the case because it affects Muslims all over the country, as well as having international ramifications. The Calcutta High Court Bar Association, although refraining from passing a resolution over the way the petition had been "entertained", expressed its concern about the case at an extraordinary general body meeting.

9 The *mehr* can be either paid promptly or deferred to a later date. In the latter case, it must be paid to the wife if the husband pronounces divorce.

ruling that there was no conflict between the relevant section of the Criminal Procedure Code and Muslim personal law.¹⁰

The ruling released a storm of protest from the Muslim community, who agitated for the decision to be overturned. Their reaction can best be understood in light of a number of considerations. Firstly, the case followed on the heels of other sensitive communal issues including the attempt to ban the Qur'an (mentioned above) and the political "Assam Accord" which Muslims generally perceived as a threat to the status of Muslim immigrants in northeastern India. The Supreme Court ruling was seen as just one more effort to suppress the minority community. It was not, Muslims argued, an effort to offer succor to Muslim women, but an attempt to attack Muslims at large.

The other two reasons for the volatile reaction hinged on how the judgment was explained by the all-Hindu ruling bench. Y. V. Chandrachud quoted verse 2:241 from the Qur'an to show that divorced women should receive maintenance: "For divorced women a provision (*mata*) in kind; a duty for those who ward off [evil]." The fact that the Muslim holy scriptures could be so blithely interpreted by "uninformed non-Muslims" was an affront to the minority community. They pointed out, for example, that the Arabic word *mata* means a temporary gain that ceases or does not tend to continue; in other words, it involves a single transaction. The fact that the judges chose to ignore historical

¹⁰ The sections of the Criminal Procedure Code which pertain to this question are sections 125 and 127. The former deals with "order for maintenance of wives, children and parents" and stipulates that persons of sufficient means who neglect or refuse to maintain dependents can be asked by the court to pay a monthly maintenance of up to Rs. 500/month. Clause 125 (1)(B) clarifies that "wives" include divorced women who have not remarried. Exemptions from maintenance are detailed in section 127; in particular, clause 127 (3)(B) exempts women who have received a "sum payable upon divorce dictated by their personal law".

interpretations of the verse and the various nuances which Muslim scholars had identified and debated down through the ages was inexcusable. It was one more attempt to rob Muslims of their identity.

To make matters worse, the judges went on to state that to prevent the suffering of future Shah Banos, India should establish a common civil code as stated in article 44 of the Constitution. This remark was like waving a red flag before a bull, for article 44 has long been a point of bitter disagreement between the Hindu and minority communities. For Muslims, efforts to establish a common civil code mean only one thing: an attack on Muslim religious freedom through the abolition of Muslim personal law.

Given the depth and bitterness of Muslim reaction to the ruling, it is not surprising that the Rajiv Gandhi government reacted by passing the "Muslim Women Protection (on rights of divorce) Act". The legislation, which came into law one year after the landmark decision was handed down, basically upholds the tenets of Muslim personal law and puts the responsibility for maintaining women who are divorced and indigent on the women's children, family or the *wakf* board. The Muslim press was vociferous in its praise for the new legislation, claiming a victory for minority rights in secular India. In contrast, the majority community—including almost all of the popular press—perceived the legislation to be a political sell-out, designed to appease the Muslim vote bank.¹¹

The Babri Masjid-Ram Janambhoomi dispute

The story of the Babri Masjid-Ram Janambhoomi dispute is a tale in miniature of Muslim-Hindu relations in India. The case presently rests before a Special Bench of the Allahabad High Court, but the growing political strength of the Bharatya Janatha Party (BJP) and an increasing tendency among all parties to use

¹¹ I am indebted to Diane D'Souza for her lecture notes on the "Shah Bano Controversy" for much of the above discussion.

religious issues to rally political support guarantee that this issue will not be easily diffused.

In 1528, under the rule of Emperor Babur, Mir Baqi erected a *masjid* in what is now the town of Ayodhya. The Emperor granted an annual allowance of sixty rupees to maintain the sacred site. Although the history of the intervening centuries is somewhat blurred, we do know that at least during the period of 1828-29, the British gave sanction for the revenues from two villages to go towards maintaining the mosque. Even more blurred, however, than the history which followed its construction is the history which preceded it. Certain Hindus have claimed, despite a lack of historical or religious evidence, that the site was originally occupied by a temple and, more importantly, is the birth place of Ram, one of the highly revered gods of Hinduism. Disputes between Hindus and Muslims about the site date back to the last century; in particular, to the period immediately following the 1857 rebellion when the Mahant of Hanumangarhi took over a part of the Babri Masjid compound and constructed a *chabutra*. Representatives from the Muslim community submitted complaints to the magistrate about the construction and a legal tussle ensued without any satisfactory conclusion. On 22 December 1949, the mosque was illegally occupied and idols of Ram were installed. In response the government proclaimed the premises "a disputed area" and locked the gates to both Hindus and Muslims. The legal battle continued, and gained added political attention when the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) gave its call in 1984 to "liberate the Ramjanmabhumi". Two years later, the district judge of Faizabad ordered the opening of the locks so that Hindus might offer *puja* in the disputed site. The Muslims were not given similar rights to offer prayers, and the community responded by forming the Babri Masjid Action Committee to pursue the minority community's interests in the case.

The dispute at Ayodhya has grown more and more heated over the last few years. The Hindu-based political parties like the VHP and BJP are determined to see a temple constructed on the site. What is more disturbing is that they claim that more than three

hundred other mosques in the country are similarly built upon the ruins of temples and must be restored to their "original" glory. In October 1990, the BJP party organized a *rath yatra* to popularize the Ayodhya issue and rally support for the temple construction. This culminated in a *shilanyas* procession to the site and a *kar seva* on 30 October in which Hindus stormed the Masjid temple complex to begin dismantling the mosque and constructing the Ram temple. In the ensuing conflagration between police and *kar sevaks*, several people were killed and others were injured. These have become the new martyrs to the Hindu cause to restore India to the Hindus.

The above three incidents epitomize the Muslim perception of threat which colors Islam in India today. This perception is so basic to the Indian Muslim psyche, that to ignore it is to fail to understand the motivations and concerns which occupy the country's Muslims. Given the unique situation of a significant Muslim minority within a vast population of Hindus, Christian-Muslim relations need to broaden so as to include the Hindu voice, or risk isolation from the most pressing issues endangering peace in India.

Islam in Indonesia

I. Sufism and Sunnism

The Islam that was introduced to Indonesia in the thirteenth century had been influenced by Sufism. It was not brought to Indonesia directly from the Middle East, but had first of all been modified in the Persian area and then reached Indonesia via India. This accounts for the fact that Muslims in Indonesia are different from Muslims in the Middle East.

It is a well-known characteristic of Sufism that it easily adapts to local traditions and that it is concerned with religion as a direct experience of God. This made it possible for Islam to spread slowly into mainland Java (the most populated island in Indonesia), where the people had already in former times absorbed Hindu culture. The Javanese are the biggest ethnic group in Indonesia. Their culture has played a decisive role in maintaining the people's socio-political life as it is. Although there is a majority of Muslims, Islam is not a determining factor in the people's social behavior. Islam was accepted into the frame of their Hindu-Javan culture without it changing their cultural or social systems. Therefore, Islam was not a substitute for their old beliefs, but rather was added to what they already had. The *ulama* (Muslim religious scholar or leader) in Java is called *Kiyai*, a traditional title for a respected man. When the *ulama* has been on a pilgrimage to Mecca, he can add the title of *Haji* to his traditional title, which becomes *Kiyai Haji*. (Indonesian Muslims who have been to Mecca proudly use the title of *Haji* in front of their name.) The Javanese *ulama* are not willing to abandon their old title, they just combine it with the new one.

Later, at the end of the nineteenth or early twentieth century, the Middle Eastern influence became stronger in Indonesia. There were increased endeavors to intensify Sunnism (orthodox Islam) and to purify religious practices which had been contaminated by both local tradition and Sufism.

II. Kepercayaan

Indonesia is the fifth most populated country in the world and ranks first in terms of the highest total Muslim population. Of 180 million Indonesians 87.5 percent or 157.5 million are Muslims. The remainder are Christians, Catholics, Bali Hindus and Buddhists. There are also some people who do not belong to any of these religions. They are the followers of the original values of Indonesia: *kepercayaan* (mysticism). In actual fact, *kepercayaan* is the amalgam of primitive religions with great religions, such as Hinduism or Islam.

III. Pancasila

Although most Indonesians are Muslims, Indonesia is neither an Islamic nor a secular state, but a Pancasila state. Pancasila is the statement of five basic principles upon which Indonesia is founded. The sequence and wording of Pancasila in the preamble to the 1945 constitution are as follows:

1. Belief in One God,
2. Just and civilized humanity,
3. Indonesian unity,
4. Democracy under the wise guidance of representative consultations, and
5. Social justice for all the peoples of Indonesia.

Consistent with the first principle, the 1945 constitution guarantees the freedom of all citizens to profess their own religion and to worship according their religion and belief. The state therefore supports the healthy growth of all religions, but it will never interfere with their internal affairs. It is interesting to note that,

consistent with the fourth principle of the Pancasila, the 1945 constitution does not recognize the principle of the majority versus the minority. In spite of that, the Muslims keep trying to apply the majority principle to justify their demands for special favors.

IV. Islamic resurgence

One of the decisions promulgated by the 1983 "Broad Guidelines of the State Policy" (the result of the MPR or People's Consultative Assembly) is the adoption of Pancasila as the sole ideological basis for the socio-political forces in Indonesia (later it was also applied to social organizations in general). The Pancasila as the state's ideological basis was the major issue before and even after Indonesian independence. The MPR's decision has affected the development of religions.

E.M. Sitompul wrote a book on this subject, with the title *Nahdlatul Ulama dan Pancasila* (The Awakening of the Ulama and Pancasila), published in 1989 by a noted Jakarta publisher, Pustaka Sinar Harapan. It analyzes the history and the role of the *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU, Muslim theologians party) in the context of Islam and the acceptance of Pancasila by all organizations as their ideological basis. In an effort to show more clearly the consequences of that acceptance on Indonesian socio-political life, we would first of all like to discuss the history of the resurgence of Islam in Indonesia.

The resurgence of Islam in Indonesia began in the early twentieth century in the form of the Islamic modernist movement. This movement was influenced by the Muslim reformism from the Middle East which was a continuation of the *Wahhabi* movement that had arisen in eighteenth-century Arabia. This modernist movement came into existence in the form of two organizations. They were the *Serikat Islam* (Islamic Union), a political organization founded in 1911, and in 1912, the *Muhjammadiyah*, an education organization aiming to promote Muslim life through educational institutions. On the one hand, the movement put every effort into promoting a modern way of

life for the Muslims, fighting Dutch colonialism at the same time. On the other hand, it launched a religious reformation based on the Qur'an and the *hadith* to purify Muslim religious practices from the influences of tradition and Sufism. The movement argued that the setback experienced by Muslims in facing Western civilization was caused by the traditional and irrational character of Muslim and Sufi influences which had deviated Islam from authentic religious practices. This movement was welcomed warmly by a group of Muslim intellectuals and the general public in big cities. It was successful in promoting the Muslim way of life and the unity necessary to fight colonialism.

V. Modernists versus traditionalists

The success of the modernists was countered by the traditionalists setting up a religious organization, the *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) in 1926. The organization's name describes what it wishes to promote: the role of the *ulama*. With *pesantren* (religious schools) and *ulama* as its backbone, the NU has won its supremacy among Muslim religious organizations in Indonesia. It has millions of members, especially in rural areas. The *ulama* say that it is impossible to understand the Qur'an and the *hadith* without sufficient knowledge of tradition. The knowledge of tradition belongs to the charismatic religious leaders: the *ulama*.

The members of the NU identify with the *ahl as-sunna wal-jama'a* (Sunnis), the followers of the tradition of Muhammad, as the majority of Muslims do. The NU is not motivated by any ideology (such a modernism, nationalism, etc.). It is an organization of *ulama* who have their own followers and their own educational institutions (the *pesantren*) where people study religious subjects. Because of the influence of Sufism—the readiness to adopt the local tradition as far as it benefits religious life—the NU is always flexible in dealing with every new development. In contrast, the modernists apply a doctrinal approach (judging any development exclusively based on what the Qur'an and the *hadith* say) and firmly believe in Islam as *the* authoritative ideology (that Islam has the authentic concept of what state and

society should be). Consequently, it is difficult for them to adjust to what is new. The conflict between the modernists and the traditionalists has been going on for a long time. It is the main factor that prevents Islam from playing a dominant role in the political developments in Indonesia.

VI. Nationalist party versus Muslim party

In 1908, almost at the same time as the resurgence of Islam, Budi Utomo (the Noble Endeavor), a study club, was established. Indonesia then declared 20 May, the day the Budi Utomo was founded, a national day ("Day of the Awakening of the Nation"). The founders of Budi Utomo were a group of intellectuals belonging to the traditional Javanese elite, obsessed with preserving Indonesian life and culture. The nationalism of the Budi Utomo could be termed a cultural nationalism, whereas the nationalism of the modernist movement was a religio-political nationalism or Muslim nationalism. Meanwhile, a political organization, the PNI (Indonesian Nationalist Party), carrying the national flag, was established in 1927. It became the rival of the Muslims before and after Indonesian independence.

In the 1955 Indonesian general elections, the PNI won the majority of votes, followed by Masyumi (the Islamic Party), the NU, and the PKI (Indonesian Communist Party) in second, third and fourth place respectively. In that first general election all the Muslim parties together got about 45 percent of the total votes; this meant that jointly the Muslims had not succeeded in becoming a dominant political force. In the later elections the results were even worse. The Muslim votes dropped sharply. For example, in the 1982 general elections the Muslim parties got only 26.1 percent of the total votes, and in 1987 they achieved 15.75 percent only.

VII. The Jakarta Charter

The history of political growth in Indonesia shows that to put Pancasila, the basic philosophy of the state, into practice is not as easy as to mention the word. Even before independence,

Muslim groups had tried hard to make Islam the foundation of the nation. But this was strongly opposed by the nationalists. On 22 June 1945, two months before independence (17 August 1945), a committee drafted a document as preamble to the draft of the constitution. The document popularly known as the Jakarta Charter reflected Muslim aspirations. When the document was discussed, the Muslims stated that they would accept the first principle of Pancasila only after a "seven-word" phrase was added so that it would read "Belief in God, with the obligation to implement Islamic law for Muslims". The Muslims' argument was that the phrase "Belief in One God" could be valid only in relation to Muslims, because only Islam rightfully believes in the One and only God.

The nationalists totally refused that idea, as "Belief in One God" is really a universal concept which "gives room to all who believe in one God". (See W. B. Sijabat, *Religious Tolerance and Christian Faith* (Jakarta: BPK, 1965), p. 33.) The non-Muslims said that the phrase created discrimination against them and that would eventually bring disunity to the nation. Finally a consensus was achieved and the seven-word phrase was omitted. Pancasila has from then on become the intermediary road between a secular and a religious state.

VIII. The Department for Religious Affairs established

In January 1946, five months after independence, the government created the Department for Religious Affairs. During its early existence, the department limited its role to dealing with Muslim religious affairs. However, the department was then complemented with two directorates dealing with Christians and Catholics respectively.

Christians do not, of course, accept the interference of the department into their religious affairs. Consequently, the involvement of this department in Christian activities is limited to the appointment of teachers for religious subjects in Christian schools and to administrative matters.

It is one of the responsibilities of the department to guide the people to implement Pancasila and the constitution, to cultivate harmony in religious life, to motivate the people to participate actively in the development of the country, and thereby to strengthen the national stability. The creation of this department is a characteristic of the Indonesian multi-religious society, but the state itself is neither secular nor religious. The government, through the Department for Religious Affairs, is responsible for supporting all religions without interfering in their internal affairs. The existence of this department should therefore be seen as a challenge to all religions to work together and to build community development on religious values.

IX. Achievements of the Department for Religious Affairs

In its efforts to maintain harmony in religious affairs, the department sponsored the formation of (1) the Council of Ulama in 1975 and (2) an interreligious consultation in 1980. The first was designed as a forum for representatives of the Muslim communities only, whilst the second was a consultative forum for representatives of *all* religions. When dealing with the government all religions are on the same level. The Council of Ulama was formed to remove the Muslims' suspicions against the role of the government and to ease the tensions arising over religious issues. The *ulama* have indeed been very effective in doing this. The interreligious consultation was organized to improve harmony between the religions; it was also an effective tool in calming down the tensions that would erupt at any time amongst the followers of the different religions.

Besides these positive approaches, the Department for Religious Affairs in 1978 issued two decrees unfavorable for the religions. They are the decrees SK-70 and SK-77 (they are usually referred to by their numbers).

SK-70 gives guidelines regarding mission and the spreading of religions, and SK-77 describes the procedure for obtaining foreign aid for religious institutions. Christians felt that the SK-70 re-

stricted the churches' preaching of the gospel, and that SK-77 implied that the government ignored the values of solidarity and community, which are of primary importance to the churches. There was no choice for the churches but to protest against these decrees. Fortunately, the government ended up by making the necessary corrections in 1979. The corrections covering both decrees were formulated in a joint decree signed by the Minister of Home Affairs and the Minister of Religious Affairs. SK-70 and SK-77 had expired.

X. The death of the Communist Party

Indonesia entered a new era in 1965, following the abortive coup instigated by the PKI (Indonesian Communist Party), known as the 30th September Movement. The coup had not been successful. The Indonesian people, backed by the armed forces, had come to the fore and overpowered the Communists; later, the government officially dissolved the PKI. Communism has ever since been banned in Indonesia.

The new era was also marked by the appointment of Suharto as the second president of Indonesia, replacing Sukarno. At that time, the new era was called the New Order, and the era before 1965 the Old Order. Having taken part in overthrowing the Communists, their old enemies, the Muslims considered the emergence of the New Order an opportunity to demand more privileges. They brought the issue of the Jakarta Charter to the surface again and demanded that it be recognized by law. But the MPR (People's Consultative Assembly) turned it down at its general meeting held some time between 1966 and 1967. It confirmed Pancasila as the basic source of Indonesian law.

XI. The successes of the New Order

The differences between the New and the Old Order can be stated as follows:

1. It was under the New Order that Indonesia was able for the first time to carry out a well-planned general development pro-

gram. The Old Order's slogan "the revolution is not finished yet" was replaced by real development activities.

2. The government was successful in maintaining a favorable socio-political atmosphere. Everyone concerned was ready to accept the idea of the many political parties merging and of limiting their total number to three. The Muslim political parties then united to become the PPP (United Development Party), the non-Muslim parties (including the nationalist, Christian and Catholic political parties) became the PDI (Indonesian Democratic Party), and the others joined the Golkar (nonaffiliated functional groups). The latter has since become the ruling party. The New Order was also successful in formulating the *Guide to Living* and the *Practice of Pancasila* through the MPR's decree No. II/MPR/1978. Other MPR decisions included the recognition of *kepercayaaan* (mysticism) as an alternative in spiritual or religious life. The Muslims opposed this decision, fearing that *kepercayaan* would be treated as a religion. In their opinion *kepercayaan* is not a religion. They did not, however, have enough political power to reverse the decision. Nevertheless, in order to pay tribute to Muslim sensitivities, the MPR decided to put *kepercayaan* under the Department of Education and Culture's jurisdiction and not under that of the Department for Religious Affairs. The climax of the New Order's achievements came in 1983 with the MPR's official decision to make Pancasila the only ideological basis for all socio-political organizations.

3. The New Order was also marked by the rising of a new socio-political power, namely the Golkar. In each general election it came out first with an absolute majority. In 1987 it won its most important victory yet with 75 percent of all votes. Using the power of the Golkar, the government could easily launch its political maneuvers. It was due to the new order that a ruling party such as the Golkar could stay and lead the administration for so long.

The rising of this new political power tremendously weakened the influence of the Muslims. Unfortunately, the decline of their power on the political level gave rise to prolonged internal con-

flicts. For this reason the largest traditional Muslim organization, the NU, quit the PPP and the political arena. Thus it returned to its original identity, *jamiyah diniyah* (religious community organization), and in 1984 accepted Pancasila as its ideological basis. The NU became the first religious organization officially and openly to declare Pancasila the ideological foundation of its organization. In the years to come all socio-political organizations did the same.

XII. The consequences

The acceptance of Pancasila as the only ideological basis of every socio-political organization has, of course, had certain consequences:

1. There is no room for an organization to adopt another ideology; it must be based on the the principles of Pancasila. The only thing an organization can do is to concentrate on developing its own programmed activities. This must be a real challenge to the Muslims since they cannot separate religion from political practices. For the government the acceptance of Pancasila has been a great victory over Islam.
2. All religions can be properly guided to develop a new religious horizon and to participate in supporting the general development without losing their identity.
3. The seeking of a common ground for building up the communities has gained momentum through Pancasila.

XIII. The NU: The founding of Indonesia is valid

The acceptance of Pancasila has forced the Muslims to adjust their interpretation of it to the life of the communities. The NU is on its way to do this. In accepting Pancasila, the NU came out with some basic affirmations:

1. Islam is a *fitra* religion (*fitra* means a pure, original, or natural

state). It is an important concept that explains the very nature of Islam. Islam perceives itself not as a new religion, but it is the natural capacity of human beings to believe that they are created by God. Therefore Islam does not replace people's values, but embraces them and perfects them in order make them harmonize with the doctrines of Islam. The modernists hold a different view of Islam, believing that it is a complete civilization or system which remains to be applied. This is the reason why they are reluctant to part with their aspiration of establishing an Islamic state. They also have difficulties to accommodate themselves to new developments. Pancasila could be accepted because it is not in contradiction to Islam. It is true that Islam cannot separate religion from politics, but the NU can differentiate it. It will not automatically refuse any new political development, but is realistic enough to evaluate and make the best of developments for the sake of religion.

2. Based on this evaluation, the NU concluded that the first principle of Pancasila (Belief in One God) reflects Islam's *tawhid* (the teaching of Islam about the Oneness of God). Because of that, the NU believes that the government's attitude to religion justifies that Indonesia is not a secular state. The Muslims, though, do not always agree with any political development, but can see that there is a potential in the government to be developed by Islam.

3. The fact that the Muslims participated in the nation's struggle for independence and that the state is responsible for improving people's lives makes Muslim support necessary. Therefore the NU feels that the foundations of the state are valid and that they are the final form of the nation's struggle.

XIV. The role of the intellectuals

Realizing the new developments, the Muslims today do no longer raise the issue of forming an Islamic state. They now intensely concentrate on building Muslim communities by increasing the number of various religious and social functions. Thus, a number of meetings, discussions, seminars, conferences and consultations

are held with a focus on Islamic development. Many books on Islam, written by foreigners, are now being translated. Muslims used to oppose this in former times. In an effort to strengthen their influence, the Muslims are expanding their lobbies; in this way they hope to influence the government to make regulations favorable to Muslims.

In 1989, the House of Representatives passed two bills, one on education, the other on religion. The law on education stipulates (among other things) that in school the subject of religion must be taught by a teacher who is himself of the religion in question. Consequently, a Christian school has no choice but to hire a Muslim teacher to teach Islam. (It should be noted that all schools, including private schools, are open to all citizens.) Christian schools feel that this limits the exercise of one of their fundamental roles: that of witnessing. The law on religion unquestionably gives special treatment to Muslims. What is interesting here is that the initiative for drafting these bills did not come from the Muslims but from the government.

The new trend is strengthened by the intellectuals who graduated in Canada, such as Mukti Ali (former minister of Religious Affairs), Harun Nasution (professor at the state institute for Islam), and the intellectuals of the younger generation, such as Abdurrahman Wahid (chairman of the NU), Nurcholis Madjid, Djohan Effendi, etc. (Currently many Muslim students prefer to undertake post-graduate studies in the United States rather than in Egypt or in one of the Middle Eastern countries.) Most of them have brought home fresh ideas about the position of Islam in Indonesia. They realize that Islam is not a complete system. It is just a source for basic principles which should be developed further in order to fit new situations. Islam is not incompatible with modernization or secularization. In fact, it motivates people to improve their way of living. Muslims have to evaluate developments realistically, they are realizing that politics are not the only way to promote Islam and its mission in the communities.

Islam's main concern is not politics but people. The current aspiration is clearly described by the popular slogan heard all over the country during the last two decades: "Islamic party, no! Islamic community, yes!"

XV. Conclusion: there is a common challenge

All religions are now facing a common challenge: to make the national goal a reality, i.e., to develop the nation and the country. The broad outlines of the state policy describe clearly that the implementation of Pancasila is development. The religious denominations are expected to play an active role in creating a spiritual and ethical foundation for this development. It means that the different religions should, on the one hand, be able to identify the challenges they have to deal with, and on the other, provide guidance in order to base the national development on religious values as well as on economic values. Moreover, all religions should recognize the living reality, namely the existence of a multi-religions community. They must find the best way to live together in harmony and to share in developing the community. For the churches, this is a favorable opportunity to find new forms of witnessing; to enhance the development of their members, to expand and improve the Christian institutions to enable them to become the salt and the light of development; and to enable themselves to grasp all opportunities to spread the kingdom of God.

Islam in Malaysia

Malaysia as a nation is unique, its population being made up of Malays, Chinese and Indians, who are in the majority, along with other, smaller ethnic groups with their own languages, cultures and religions. According to the national census of 1980, Muslims represent 53 per cent of the population, with the balance distributed among Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Taoism and other, indigenous beliefs. Thus we can say that the religious situation is a complex one.

The fact that the Muslims are in the majority has historical reasons. Islam was introduced to the peninsula in the fourteenth century and became the source of Malay religious beliefs. Even when Malaysia was under British rule, British officials understood the significance of Islam to the Malay rulers and people, and thus left the religious control to the sultanates. By this arrangement Islam has remained a major factor in the country's politics and its subsequent Islamization. In discussing the Islamization, we cannot ignore the close and intimate relationship between Islam and the Malays. To quote Tun Salleh, Malaysia is a multi-religious country, but the Malays will have only one religion, Islam. The idea that a Malay could be non-Muslim is not admissible, such a person is considered an infidel, someone who has been rejected by Islam. In order to be Malay, one must first of all embrace Islam. The constitution clarifies the rights of the Malays: ". . . to believe in Islam, to observe the ways, traditions and speech of the Malays". According to the late Tunku Abdul Rahman, "a Malay who abandons his religion ceases to be a Malay". The practice of considering religion and a certain racial group as being one and the same is beneficial to Islam. Rejecting the religion is tantamount to betraying the nation, an unacceptable act. A non-Malay who embraces Islam is taken to be a Malay.

After Merdeka (liberation) on August 31, 1957, the political mainstream was based upon the United Malay National Organization's (UMNO) directives—Malaysia was to be a secular state. The leadership of the UMNO put the emphasis on that which is Malayan in Malaysia's national ideology; at that time Islam was not a major factor in its considerations. The sixties were a period of strong nationalistic fervor, but Islamization directly and indirectly influenced the ideological outlook and created opportunities for some to gain material advantages. In an effort to promote their own advantage, a small number of people began a series of economic and educational programs in a common front for the development of the nation. This resulted in serious sectionalism and to certain racial groups being ostracized. The racial riots of May 13, 1969, in which the Chinese were victimized, came as a climax. The violence had immeasurable repercussions on the economy. Criticism was voiced that Islam came second to secularism. A Malay scholar, M. Abu Bakar, said that in the late seventies and early eighties the Islamic tendencies within the Malay society were obviously becoming an advantageous option. Islam as a guiding principle was beginning to be accepted by a growing number of Malays and Islamic revival became very strong during the last two decades. It is described by Chandra Muzaffar as "the endeavor to re-establish Islam values, Islam practices, Islam institutions, Islamic laws, Islam in its entirety, in the lives of Muslims everywhere". Urbanization may have been one of the causes of this revivalism, as people who came from the rural areas were trying to find a sense of belonging and identity through their religion. Reaction against the capitalist approach of development may be another factor that contributed to revivalism. Revivalism has become a means of preserving the Malay identity in an increasingly dichotomized society. So much so that even the UMNO leaders feel committed to the Islamization of Malaysian society. This is directly affecting the national ideology and politics.

Various happenings have confirmed this new outlook. It is undeniable that Dr Mahathir, the present prime minister, has been instrumental in bringing Anwar Ibrahim, the strong advocate of

Islamization, into the UMNO, and this has added thrust to the effort. The issue of Islamization thus plays a major role in the political arena of Malaysia.

The 1980s were a period in which Islam advanced considerably. Following the new political direction, the Islamic University, the Islam Bank and the Islamic Insurance Takaful were established. Even the constitution was amended to accommodate the *shari'ah* (Islamic) courts. Moreover, the government furthered the Islamization process through actions such as making Islamic culture part of the university curricula, setting up Islamic classes in primary and secondary schools and creating Islamic centers. A variety of reactions were the result. With the rising influence of Islam the other races began to feel threatened and began to raise a number of questions with regard to their future. Let us now consider the various problems faced by the other races in the religious, economic, educational and employment sectors.

1. From the religious point of view. The constitution guarantees religious freedom. Everyone has the right to freely choose their religion. However, Islam, whose influence is mounting, does not tolerate the growth of other religions. One could say that the Malays are not interested in other religions, with the exception of those who received a British education in the early days. Some of these are probably attracted to Christianity. A small number of them did indeed convert to Christianity. A cabinet minister declared that Malay society had been infiltrated by the gospel and described it as a menace worse than communism. Attitudes such as this have unfavorably affected the work of the gospel in Malaysia. For instance, applying for land in order to build a church has become extremely difficult, a fact which has led to shophouses or private homes being used as worship places. However, this is in conflict with the Urban and Rural Plan as well as with the Land Ordinance. Here are a few examples:

The state of Johor:

	<i>place of worship/number of believers</i>	<i>area required in sq ft</i>
mosque	1:800	24,000
surau ¹	1:250	6,000
non-Muslim	1:4,000	12,000

The state of Perak:

mosque	1:800	24,000
surau	1:250	6,000
non-Muslim ²	1:5,000	24,000-48,000

2. From the educational point of view. In his white paper the first minister of education, Abdul Razak, laid the foundations for the present education policies. It stipulated that the Malay language be the national language, and permitted the use of other languages as media of instruction for the education of the people. Following the 1969 fiasco, it was announced that after 1983 Malay had to be used as the sole medium of instruction and that examinations had to be written in the national language. This ruling and the imposition of a quota system has meant that non-Malay students find it difficult to enter local universities, and, owing to the bias of the governing bodies, find no employment in government offices and other agencies.

The approximate percentage of Malays in the different universities is:

¹ a small mosque

² Only when the non-Muslim organization reaches the required number of members is it allowed to apply for land.

University	Malay students
University of Malaya	60 %
University of Science, Malaysia	60 %
University of Agriculture of Malaysia	90 %
Technological University of Malaysia	90 %
International Islamic University	95 %
Northern University of Malaysia	90 %

The number of Chinese students is not to exceed 19.6 per cent of university enrollments. Many Chinese parents therefore send their offspring to Chinese-speaking schools in the hope that later on they could be educated in places such as Taiwan, Japan and Australia. The above regulation has caused difficulties and obstacles for the education and the future of the other races as well; they lack a sense of security and belonging and tend to emigrate also. Moreover, Islamic instruction has led a number of non-Muslim children to adopt Islam without the knowledge of their parents. This point has become a sensitive issue for the authorities and for the non-Muslims it is a major blow. The Chinese community's response has been to revive traditional and cultural practices, a fact which has often led to frictions.

3. From the economic point of view. Before the New Economic Policy, initiated after the racial riots in 1970, the Chinese community was in control of a considerable part of the economy. Since the formulation of the New Economic Policy, this situation has largely been reversed. The larger corporations and businesses have been handed over to the Malays, the other ethnic groups can only hope for the crumbs.

4. From the political point of view. Founded on the various sultanates, the unity of Malaysia is dependent upon that which is Malaysian. It is therefore laid down in the constitution that the people are to worship Allah and must obey their rulers. Islam has become *the* uniting factor in Malaysia. Political groups have been formed under the guise of uniting religion and the people; at the same time the people are being separated on racial and religious

grounds. The other races and political parties find themselves in a no-win situation; a situation which makes it impossible to challenge the racial supremacy of the Malays as it is strongly supported by the political system and embodied in the constitution.

The Malays wield control over the political, economic, educational and military forces; to continue their absolute power, the authorities have to ensure a strong Malay support at the grassroots level and cannot afford to be exposed to the attacks of the opposition. Support of the Islamization process by the UMNO-backed government is inevitable. Islamization only benefits Muslims and creates difficulties for the non-Muslims. When religion, politics and the nation become one and the same, the adherents of other religions must ask themselves how to relate to that country and how they are to respond to this development.

Backed by the government, the process of Islamization will affect the other religions, races, cultures, and the educational and economic development; it will affect the freedom of association and the right to practise another religion, and for some the right even to exist. The non-Muslim communities have to face a series of problems; if they are not solved, it means that Malaysia will continue in a delicate balance, and that its people will be denied prosperity and peace.

The Christian involvement with the Muslim community

On the national level, dialogue between the church and the governmental authorities takes place through the Christian Federation of Malaysia or through the Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhists, Christians, Hindus and Sikhs (MCCBCHS) on matters pertaining to religion.

The law in Malaysia makes it illegal for Christians to propagate their faith among the Muslims. Certain Malay words, for instance "Allah", are not available for Christian use, even though Malay is the national language.

At the grassroots level, Islamic revivalism tends to make the Muslim community more and more self-contained. As a reaction, also non-Muslims place more emphasis on their identity and religion. As a result, a dangerous polarization along religious lines is occurring. Social interaction between Muslims and people of other religions, Christians included, is becoming more and more limited. Misunderstandings between the communities are frequent because Christianity is inaccurately presented—for instance in history books used in the schools—and its teachings are misinterpreted. In the political struggle, a political party with Christian leadership may be accused of favoring Christians and oppressing Muslims. Every action undertaken by a Christian political leader is interpreted as representing the whole Christian community, which can hardly be true.

What should be done

The church, as a contribution to national unity and harmony, ought to initiate dialogues and to clear up the misunderstandings between the two communities.

The churches ought to promote civic consciousness among its members; they must play a prophetic role within the nation, together with people of other faiths who have a similar vision. Many Muslim leaders are in favor of more social justice. The church and those leaders who uphold the same values should speak with one voice. "When some Muslims or Islamic organizations speak up for multi-racialism, fair play and justice for non-Muslims, there is always a dead silence on the part of the non-Muslims. Is it too much to say, 'We support you in your endeavor'?" We should take this voice seriously. Perhaps this could be the beginning of building bridges for a better understanding of each other.

The churches must teach their members to avoid dichotomization and polarization along ethnic groups in their social interactions; they should strive to promote unity in diversity in a multi-racial and multi-religious society.

Finally, establishing good relationships is a two-way street. Christians and Muslims should try to understand each other's struggles, fears, ambitions and joys. This is the only hope for eliminating mutual distrust and suspicion, and to enhance peace and harmony.

Appendix: Statistical information

	Malaysia	Sarawak	Sabah
Total population (1980 census)	13.07 million	1.4 million	1.2 million
	%	%	%
Christians	6.4	28.0	27.2
Muslims	52.9	26.0	51.0
Chinese religionists	11.6	7.0	8.0
Buddhists	17.3	10.0	
Hindus	7.0		
Primal religions		15.0	
Others	4.8	14.0	13.8

Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Pakistan

95 percent of Pakistan's population of around 115 million is Muslim. The remaining 5 percent comprise Christians, Hindus, Parsees, Qadianis and Sikhs. Constituting about 2 percent of the population, Christians make up the largest minority group. Pakistan, which gained independence from British rule on 14 August 1947, is divided into four provinces: Punjab, Sindh, the North-West Frontier, and Baluchistan. Although the national language is Urdu, most of the official transactions are carried out in English which is widely understood. The literacy rate is 30 percent.

Christians and Muslims have been coexisting peacefully for a long time. Christians were in favor of and voted for the founding of the state of Pakistan and defended the country along with the Muslims. Their efforts and services, particularly in the fields of education, social work and health care, were recognized and appreciated by the government, and a number of Christian personalities were awarded certificates and medals by the presidents of Pakistan. Christians are proud to call themselves true Pakistanis, for they lived on this land before the creation of the state of Pakistan. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, assured minority communities of their rights. Although the constitution safeguards the rights of minorities, the reality is different.

Christians face a number of difficulties and injustices in the fields of employment and education. For instance, they are discriminated against when it comes to finding employment in the civil service or other government offices. The government's moves to implement Islamic law and the nationalization of Christian schools, colleges and hospitals pose a considerable

threat. The creation of separate electorates has caused divisions amongst the people and made Christians feel like second-class citizens. In spite of all these problems, Christians and their leaders actively promote cordial relations and the dialogue between Christians and Muslims.

Dialogues between Christians and Muslims are carried out on various levels such as:

The dialogue of life. Christians and Muslims, who have been living side by side in cities and villages, share their joys and sorrows.

The dialogue of deeds. Both communities work together in schools, hospitals and factories and cooperate on issues of justice and peace, refugees and other development work for the good of the general public.

The dialogue of religious experience. Christians and Muslims share their personal religious experience (e.g., of fasting, prayer, meditation and other aspects of their faith) on a personal level. This can take place while traveling on a train or a bus.

The dialogue of words. An exchange of opinion on different topics of a religious, moral, social or political nature, or on more concrete issues such as child labor, women, and problems of minorities.

The attitude of the church

In Pakistan the church has taken a keen interest in promoting Christian-Muslim dialogue. The Roman Catholic Church and other churches have taken steps to strengthen such encounters. For example, the Catholic Bishops' Conference established the National Commission for Christian-Muslim Relations Pakistan (Rabita Commission) in 1985, with Bishop John Joseph as chairperson and two representatives from each one of the six dioceses. The Rabita Commission has organized several programs, seminars and conferences where Muslims and Christians meet.

There are dialogue groups in the different Catholic dioceses of Pakistan. In Lahore, for instance, the Pakistan Association of Interreligious Dialogue has been meeting every month since August 1984. Here, an average number of thirty Muslims and Christians come together and share their views, devotions and creeds. Since 1986, this association has been meeting at the Dominican Center, Lahore. Besides their regular programs, this association has also organized several seminars on topics such as the "Status of Minorities in a State", "Mysticism in Islam and Christianity", "The Shari'ah Bill and Minorities in Pakistan", etc. Furthermore, it has organized joint memorial services and celebrated Christmas, Easter, *Eidul Fitr* and *Eidul Azha* and breaking of the fast.

The Christian-Muslim dialogue group in Multan has also been meeting on a regular monthly basis over the last couple of years. Here, different topics are discussed in order to promote better understanding and harmony. The Pastoral Institute in Multan offers courses on interfaith encounters designed for teachers of religious instruction.

In 1989, a three-day seminar on "Child Labor" in Multan with Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and Christian participation from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan was organized by the Rabita Commission. In October 1991, the Rabita Commission organized a three-day conference on "New Horizons for Peace and Harmony in Pakistan" in Faisalabad. Over 70 people, including the president of Pakistan, Mr Gulam Ishaq Khan and many high-ranking government officials, Christians and Muslims, participated in this event.

A lot of work remains to be done in this field. Dialogue at the grassroots level is essential. To my mind, what is most important in Pakistan today is that the ordinary people are reached, and that dialogue starts in the family. The promotion and practice of dialogue on all levels is not an easy task. Sometimes people suspect that there is a hidden agenda and that the real motive is one of conversion.

Christians, being in the minority, sometimes have to pay the price for anti-Muslim sentiments abroad. For example, when in India the issue of Babri Masjid was raised and resulted in rioting, it was the churches that came under attack in Pakistan. At the outbreak of the Gulf War, Christians were threatened and made to feel very insecure.

Another possible hindrance is the fact that Muslims being in the majority see no real need for a dialogue with people of other faiths. On the other hand, Christians, being a minority, feel fearful and reluctant to engage dialogue; thus there is a lack of motivation on both sides.

Nevertheless, in spite of all these complications, dialogue seems to have a bright future. Progress is slow but steady. The dialogue with people of other faiths, particularly with Muslims, is an imperative for Christians in Asia.

The future of the church in Pakistan lies in dialogue. We must be prepared to meet this considerable challenge because we, both Christians and Muslims, have to face great difficulties. Abject poverty reigns throughout Asia, including Pakistan, and millions of people are being denied access to natural resources. The exploitation of the environment has resulted in the dwindling of precious resources and has thus destroyed the material and spiritual habitat of many of our people. Military policies have led to the wasting of resources by spending the greater part of the national budget on armaments, and human needs are virtually negated.

Traditional patterns of discrimination against women prevail. Young people face a future of unemployment and thus are frustrated. In the name of religion, gender and caste most of the fundamental rights are denied. Amongst numerous other hardships there is a high rate of illiteracy, and child labor is common. We should come together, talk together, and plan together in order to find solutions to our problems.

An yet, there are signs of hope. There is cooperation and a desire for community. There is an urgent need for all leaders, especially for religious leaders, to come together and create among the people a sense of respect for and tolerance of one another, and of unity. This is possible only through interreligious dialogue where all human beings work as brothers and sisters for their own betterment and for the betterment of humanity as a whole.

Contact and Conflict: A Historical Survey of Muslim-Christian Relations in the Philippines

I. Introduction: Early expansion of Islam (632-732)

After the death of the Prophet Muhammad in AD 632, Muslim armies burst forth from the deserts of Arabia toward the east and the west. In the east, the former Sassanid or Persian Empire crumbled and paved the way for future expansion to India. In the west, Islamic forces conquered all of Christian North Africa and continued across the Straits of Gibraltar into Spain. The Muslim armies pushed rapidly north toward the border of France where they were finally stopped by Christian forces at the battle of Poitiers in 732. Thus, one hundred years after the death of Muhammad, the stage was set for more than 1000 years of intermittent, bloody warfare between Spanish Christians and Muslims—over 700 years in the Spanish homeland (732-1492) and more than 300 years in the Spanish colony in the Philippines (1578-1898).

II. More than three centuries of contact and conflict between Moro Muslims and Spanish-Filipino Christians in the southern Philippines (1578-1898)

Skipping over the exciting, violent history of Spain's struggle to eliminate the Muslim occupiers from their homeland, a struggle that had a major influence on the infamous crusades, the sixteenth century Reformation and the subsequent period of exploration and colonialization of much of the world by Spain and Portugal, we focus our attention on the events of the Spanish period in the Philippines and the after-effects on Muslim-Christian relations in that part of the world.

In 1517 Ferdinand Magellan, after a long, epoch-making voyage across the Atlantic and the Pacific ocean in an attempt to reach the east by sailing west to prove the earth was round, landed on the islands later known as the Philippines and claimed them for the Spanish King Charles I, also known as Emperor Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire. Thus, these islands were named after the Crown Prince, Philip of Spain. Spain did not establish its first permanent colony until 1565 on the central island of Cebu. There they found Moro Muslim merchant ships from Borneo.

When the Spanish transferred the center of government from Cebu to Manila in 1572, they met their first resistance from Muslim chieftains who had established their rule in Manila Bay. The Spanish easily defeated the Muslims in Manila, but they soon discovered that Muslim sultanates were more firmly established in the large southern island of Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago, a string of smaller islands reaching from western Mindanao to North Borneo. Imagine the surprise and dismay of the Spaniards who had sailed half-way around the world to learn that their ancient, traditional enemies had reached this part of the world more than 200 years ahead of them!

In 1578, the Spanish Governor General declared war against the Moros in the south with the goal of conquering and converting them by the power of the sword. The Spanish considered this to be the continuation of the crusades. This was the beginning of the Spanish-Moro wars which continued until the end of the Spanish period in the Philippines in 1898. The evil legacy of this violent period continues up to the present. The Spanish drafted Christian Filipino converts from the North to assist them in their battles against the Moros, thus creating a permanent division between Muslims and Christians in the Philippines—people who are descendants of the proud Malay race.

As in most wars, there were no winners, only losers in the Spanish-Moro wars. Many bloody battles on land and sea were fought during the 300-year war. Toward the end, the Spanish were gaining control by using steamships and superior weapons.

However, before victory could be proclaimed, the Spanish were abruptly forced to leave the Philippines as a result of the Spanish-American War.

The Spanish had succeeded in halting the expansion of Islam into western Europe in the eighth century. They also halted the expansion of Islam in the Far East in the Philippine Islands in the sixteenth century. The history of this part of the world would have been far different if this had not happened. The Spanish failed to conquer and convert the Moros in the southern Philippines. They did succeed in establishing permanent mutual antipathy, prejudice and suspicion which continue to have a negative influence on Muslim-Christian relations up to the present time.

III. Muslim-Christian relations during the American period (1898-1964)

After a series of bloody, one-sided battles against the brave Moro warriors, the American troops gradually brought the Muslim resistance in Mindanao and Sulu under military control. A "policy of attraction" was implemented by building schools, hospitals and roads in the Muslim areas. Public education was offered throughout the Philippines. Many Muslims did not send their children to school, because they considered this another strategy to convert the students. Later, several Muslims saw the advantages of education. Some were even given scholarships for higher education in the United States.

The American administration also began to introduce democratic forms of local government in the Muslim areas. As preparations were made to grant independence to the Philippines, the Muslim areas were placed under the administration of Christian Filipinos at one stage. Muslim leaders considered this a betrayal to be placed under the control of their traditional enemies. Therefore, a large group of Muslim leaders sent a petition to President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1936, requesting that Mindanao and

Sulu remain a colony of the U.S. and that the rest of the majority Christian Philippines be given independence, as scheduled, in 1946.

During the Japanese occupation of the Philippines in the Second World War, 1941-1946, Muslim and Christian Filipinos in Mindanao united in guerrilla activities against the common enemy, harassing the Japanese troops. After the war, this cooperation did not continue. Muslim-Christian relations were again made worse when large numbers of Christian immigrants moved from heavily populated areas of the Philippines to the more open areas in Mindanao, which was then called the "land of promise".

An interesting footnote to the American period was the work of Dr Frank Laubach, an American missionary of the Congregational Church. During the time between the First and the Second World War, Laubach introduced a simple method of learning to read called the "Each One-Teach One" method. It was first implemented in the Maranao Muslim area where it enjoyed a ready acceptance and rapid spread throughout the area. Laubach became known as the "apostle of literacy". Laubach introduced his method in Asia, Africa and South America; he is credited with teaching millions to read through the World Literacy League. It is ironic that the Muslim area of the Philippines, where his method was developed, today has the lowest literacy rate of the whole country—barely above 50 per cent.

IV. Muslim-Christian relations in the Republic of the Philippines (1946-1972)

1. The early years of the newly independent Philippines (1946-1972). After the Second World War, the United States granted independence to the Philippines as planned, on 4 July 1946. The struggle to survive and rebuild a country from the ravages of war occupied the full attention and resources of government agencies. There was little concern or attention paid to the "Moro problem" which was later referred to as the "Mindanao problem".

A Philippine congressional study in 1954 called attention to the neglect of Muslim Filipinos by stating that they had the lowest standards of education, health and agriculture in the entire country. A Commission for National Integration and a Mindanao Development Authority were established. These agencies did not help the Muslims' situation, and the Christians had no concern for them.

2. The Marcos period (1972-1986). When President Marcos proclaimed martial law in the Philippines on 21 September 1972, he gave two reasons to justify his action: First, the communist rebellion in the North and second, the Muslim rebellion in the South. This strongly indicates that the minority Muslim population was desperate and that younger Muslims were using violent methods to obtain their rights.

A Muslim secession movement in the early 1970s emphasized that there was a real problem in the relationship with the majority Christian government. The Muslims were ready to take matters into their own hands. Many agreed that they could not receive justice under the present government. The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) was organized to establish an independent republic known as Bangsa Moro. At their peak, the MNLF was reported to have 30,000 well-armed, well-trained guerrillas in the Bangsa Moro Army (BMA). Many bloody battles were fought and ambushes laid against the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in Mindanao and Sulu. The lives of hundreds of thousands of rural residents were disrupted as a result—both Muslim and Christian. Thousands of lives were lost and there were many thousand wounded as fighting increased.

This prompted the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) to establish a Muslim-Christian Reconciliation Study Committee in 1971 to promote understanding. In November 1971, the Roman Catholic Mindanao-Sulu Pastoral Conference issued a statement expressing its concern about Muslim-Christian relationships.

The first national Muslim-Christian dialogue with the theme "Muslims and Christians in Society: Toward Goodwill, Consultation and Working Together in Southeast Asia" was held in September 1974 under the sponsorship of the Roman Catholic Church. This was preliminary to a Southeast-Asian Muslim-Christian dialogue held later in Hong Kong under the sponsorship of the World Council of Churches. Other national dialogues followed in the Philippines sponsored by the NCCP and Muslims. More important formal and informal dialogues followed at the local level throughout Mindanao involving Roman Catholics and Protestants. This included several college students' dialogues which continue at the present time.

The Tripoli Agreement of 1976 led to a temporary cease-fire between the MNLF and the AFP. It also led to the inauguration of two so-called autonomous regions in Mindanao and Sulu in an attempt to satisfy some of the demands of the MNLF which had resumed its demand for secession. This was a political gain for the Marcos administration as it reduced international Muslim support for the MNLF.

3. The Aquino administration (1986-1991). One positive accomplishment of the MNLF was to call the nation's attention to the plight of the Muslim Filipinos and to give this problem a higher priority. After the dramatic, largely non-violent overthrow of the Marcos regime by the "People's Power" revolution of February 1986, Corazon Aquino was inaugurated as president. One of her first acts was to call a constitutional convention. One of the provisions of the new constitution was to give autonomy to "Muslim Mindanao" as well as to the ethnic minority in the mountains of northern Luzon. The MNLF was invited to participate in the establishment of an Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). The MNLF declined because there was no provision for inclusion of the entire island of Mindanao. Latest census figures indicate that the Mindanao-Sulu region is made up by 77 percent Christians, 17 percent Muslims and 6 percent animistic tribal groups called Lumads.

Of the fifteen Mindanao-Sulu provinces which voted on whether or not to become a part of ARMM, only four of the five provinces with a Muslim majority voted favorably. The ARMM was inaugurated in 1990 after hotly contested elections for officials. At this time it is too early to evaluate whether or not the ARMM will achieve its purpose of satisfying the Muslim desire for self-government. Present indications are that the ARMM has not received budgeted funds and that its educational, economic and health standards are the lowest in the Philippines.

The MNLF has splintered into the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the MNLF-Reformed. Its power and influence are diminishing at the present time. Muslim-Christian dialogue continues on a decreasing scale, and much more could be done to promote Muslim-Christian understanding.

V. Summary and conclusion

If the political and economic stability and the prospects of the Republic of the Philippines are reported to be the poorest in the ASEAN region today, we can surmise that the political and economic prospects of the Muslims in the southern Philippines are much worse than those of the average Christian Filipino. For centuries, the Muslims have been neglected, exploited, despised or forgotten by most of the majority Christian population.

An accurate estimate of the population of the Philippines in 1990 is 65 million people. An accurate estimate of the Muslim minority is 5 percent or just over three million. One can hear and read much higher numbers, especially from Muslim sources. However, careful research reveals that 5 percent is a fairly accurate figure. No matter what the actual number of Muslim Filipinos may be, their plight deserves the attention and action of the entire country and the world community, including the church.

Many different influences are at work in the Muslim areas of the Philippines at present—from the most conservative, extremist fundamentalists to the most animistic type of folk Islam. There

is a resurgence of Islam in the Philippines parallel to that found in other areas of Southeast Asia. Shiite influence from Iran is found beside modern Western influence.

The majority of Muslim Filipinos have a sincere desire to be good Muslims and good citizens of the Philippines. The Muslims have a rich cultural heritage to share with the nation and the world. What is the role of the church in relation to Islam in the Philippines?

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Part III

Reports from Africa, the Middle East and Europe

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The Direction of Christian-Muslim Relations in Sub-Saharan Africa

(Paper originally presented at a consultation on Christian-Muslim relations, at Hartford Seminary, Hartford, USA, in June 1990.)

I. Introduction

In 1981, the population of sub-Saharan Africa, that is the whole continent except the Arabic speaking countries of North Africa, amounted to over 400 million. R. Delval estimated that, at that time, nearly 30 percent of the population of the area were Muslims. D. Barrett estimated the Christian population in the area at 53 percent in 1980. Naturally, in the different subregions of Africa, percentages of Muslims and Christians differ widely. In West Africa, an area which had over 150 million inhabitants in 1981, Muslims accounted for 47 percent of the population, according to Delval, and Barrett gives 37 percent for Christians. For northeast Africa, these percentages are respectively 53.7 and 35, for East Africa 13.4 and 62.6, for Central Africa 8.4 and 44.2, for the Indian Ocean area 5.6 and 50.8, for southern Africa 1 and 77.6 (Barrett 1982; Delval 1984; Haafkens 1988). These figures are of course tentative, and it should be noted that Muslim sources generally give a much higher estimate for the Muslim population. In statistics published by the Islamic Foundation, for instance, the number of Muslims in sub-Saharan Africa is given as around 50 percent (Ahsan 1985; Haafkens 1988). However, nobody would deny that in this area, with a rapidly growing population now standing at about 500 million, the persons concerned with Christian-Muslim relationships may

be counted in hundreds of millions. Further, one can safely conclude that a polarization along religious lines could seriously jeopardize the future of this part of the world and that the maintenance of good, neighborly relations between Christians and Muslims is a matter of considerable importance.

II. Christian-Muslim relations before 1800

1. The earliest encounter: Muslim refugees find a safe haven in Christian Ethiopia. Around AD 615, when Muslims suffered severe persecution in Mecca, a number of them found refuge with the Negus in Axum. These included Uthman, a close companion of the Prophet and his third successor, as well as the Prophet's daughter Ruqayya, Uthman's wife.

The Christian ruler refused to extradite the Muslims when a delegation sent to him from Mecca asked for this. This decision in favor of the Muslims seems to have been influenced by the Negus' awareness of an affinity between Christianity and the faith of the Muslims (Guillaume 1968: 146-153).

2. The Christian kingdoms of the Nile valley 580-1504: Centuries of peaceful relations and final Islamization. Around AD 580, three Christian kingdoms were established in the Nile valley in the area of present-day Sudan. They were, from north to south: Nobatia or Al-Maris, Makuria or Al-Muquarra, and Alodia or Alwa. The first two kingdoms were united and became known as Nubia with Dongola as its capital (Davidson 1972: 132; Hasan 1966: 144). For six centuries, the relationships of Nubia with Muslim Egypt were governed by a treaty and can be characterized as having been generally peaceful. Also within the kingdoms Christian-Muslim relations were harmonious. However, the Turkish Mamluk soldier-kings of Egypt overthrew Nobatia in the thirteenth century. Makuria fell somewhat later and Alwa came under Muslim rule in 1504. The disappearance of Christianity in Nubia was linked with the continuous Arab migration into the

area and had to do also with the urban character of the Christian civilization and the isolation in which the Christian kingdoms found themselves (Hasan 1966: 146-154; Davidson 1972: 137).

3. Ethiopia: Armed struggle and an atmosphere of religious tolerance. In the course of its long history, Ethiopia has seen a good many armed struggles between the Christians, who were concentrated in the highlands, and the Muslims of the lower areas, particularly from the late thirteenth to the sixteenth century. The war of Ahmad Gran against the Christian empire in the sixteenth century is well-known. Both sides received outside support, the Christians from the Portuguese, and the Muslims from the Turkish pasha of Zabid in Yemen (van Donzel 1969: 11). After that particular war, the position of the Christian empire was stabilized and a *modus vivendi* between Christians and Muslims reached. The status of the Muslim minority in the Christian heartland of Ethiopia was comparable to that of the "protected people" (Jews, Christians) in Islamic countries. Despite the wars, an atmosphere of religious tolerance generally prevailed in Ethiopia (Ullendorff 1971: 4, 5).¹

4. Conflict on the East-African coast: The Portuguese and the Swahili. By the end of the fifteenth century, the Portuguese arrived on the East African coast, where they discovered the flourishing cities of the Muslim Swahili, a people of Afro-Asian (Arab, Persian) origin (Davidson 1972: 203-207; Salim 1978: 885 ff.). Almost immediately an armed conflict broke out which lasted until the first part of the eighteenth century. An important literary document relating this conflict is the Swahili epic "Heraklios". This epic is an evocation of a war between the Prophet Muhammad and Heraklios, the Christian emperor of Byzantium. It was composed in 1728, a year before the Swahili, in alliance

¹ For a different view of the Christian-Muslim relationship in Ethiopia, see: Moten 1990.

with Arabs from Oman, drove the Portuguese out of the city of Mombasa. The war-like Christian-Muslim relationship in this era is clearly reflected in this monument of Swahili literature (Knapert 1977).

5. Insights from this period. Looking back on the period before 1800, one can affirm that there were moments and periods when Christian-Muslim relations were harmonious, as in the first Christian-Muslim encounter in Ethiopia around 615. The positive relationships between Christian Nubia and Muslim Egypt over a number of centuries can be mentioned here, as well as some periods in the later history of Ethiopia, when religious tolerance prevailed. However, the history of this period also saw confrontation and war. Several such conflicts were directly related to the tensions between Christians and Muslims in the Mediterranean and also involved people from outside Africa. Where relationships were harmonious, this may have been due, largely, to resources within African communities which made it possible for people to live together in peace in culturally and religiously pluralistic societies.

III. The period of European dominance 1800-1960

1. Islam in tropical Africa before the European impact. In several parts of Africa south of the Sahara, Islam had already been present for many centuries when the period of European dominance began around 1800. This was true, in particular, for the Sahel area, all the way from the Atlantic ocean to the Nile. Islam had made a great impact on society, especially in the western and northeastern parts of Africa. In East Africa Islam was established in the coastal areas, rather than inland. The Muslim presence in East Africa extended as far south as Mozambique and Madagascar. Throughout the history of Islam in Africa there were long periods when Muslims lived together peacefully with the adherents of African traditional religions. Traditional African views of life often influenced the way Islam was understood.

Rulers would convert to Islam without abandoning a number of pre-Islamic customs and religious practices, especially as many of their subjects did not become Muslims. Sufi orders often played a major role in making Islam accessible to the African people.

The Islamic reform movements that advocated a purification of Islam on the basis of its Arabic sources, the Qur'an, the Traditions, the *shari'ah*, were also important. In West Africa, for example, between about 1700 and 1900, revolutionary revival movements led to the establishment of Islamic states. Rulers accused of being halfhearted Muslims, of disobeying the *shari'ah* and of concluding alliances with non-Muslims were overthrown. Armed force was used to establish, maintain and extend these states.

2. Colonial policies and Islam: Pragmatism. When conquering Africa, the colonial powers often met with firm resistance, also from Muslims. Once they had established their authority, however, the Europeans generally adopted a pragmatic approach to Islam. Where there were influential Muslim rulers or leaders, their authority was often recognized, on condition that they cooperate with the administration. The British, for instance, developed a system of indirect rule, which they applied in northern Nigeria, Sudan, etc. In some cases this system strengthened the authority of Muslim rulers in areas where traditional religion was predominant (Crampton 1978: 56 ff.). To avoid tensions, colonial authorities also imposed restrictions on Christian missions in predominantly Muslim areas (Crampton 1978: 48 ff., 53). On the other hand, there was a tendency to limit the contacts of African Muslims with Muslims elsewhere, for fear that anticolonial ideas would spread. (Trimingham 1959: 218).

In areas where the Muslim influence was less strong, the colonial administration supported the educational work of Christian missions, and the authorities did not encourage or favor Islam. Sometimes, as for instance in Zaire, they tried to contain its in-

fluence and its spread. In most countries, the policy was to maintain the principle of freedom of religion as long as this would not lead to political instability.

The changes in African society during the colonial period contributed to the considerable growth of the Muslim community in a good many countries. The increased security provided new opportunities for Muslim traders. Thus, Muslim trading communities grew and spread to new areas. Moreover, Islam became a viable option for the growing number of those who, under the new conditions, were not satisfied with the traditional African way of life. This phenomenon extended to the upper strata of African society: during that period several traditional rulers turned to Islam, as for example, around 1917, the king of the Bamoun in Fommban, Cameroon.

The growth of the Muslim community is highlighted by figures given by D. Barrett in the *World Christian Encyclopedia*. He mentions an increase of the Muslim population in Nigeria from 25.9 percent to 43.4 percent between 1900 and 1963, and an increase in Tanzania from 7 percent to 33.2 percent between 1900 and 1957. The estimated increase between 1900 and 1970 is from 30 percent to 78 percent for Mali, from 10 percent to 35 percent for Burkina Faso, and from 10 percent to 38 percent for Sierra Leone (Barrett 1982).

3. Missionaries and Islam: Rivalry, withdrawal. Many missionaries, coming mostly from Europe and influenced by the centuries-long rivalry between Christianity and Islam in the Mediterranean area, regarded Islam in Africa as a danger, as a force to be fought. Missionary strategists worked out plans to set up a barrier of mission stations which were to stop the southward spread of Islam.

For example, at a synod meeting of the Anglican diocese of Western Equatorial Africa in 1908, special attention was paid to the fact that Islam was rapidly gaining ground in Yoruba country

in Nigeria. One of the speakers stated: "The Church must face this fact as a country faces an enemy, and determine upon a definite plan of campaign" (Gbadamosi 1978: 230).

According to D. Bone, the Christian missions' response to the development of Islam in Malawi was characterized by ignorance, distrust, alarm and a spirit of competitiveness (Bone 1984; 1987: 20).

Argumentative writings from other parts of the world found their way to Africa. E. Blyden reports that around 1880, Muslims in Sierra Leone were reading *The Revelation of Truth*, a book in Arabic by Rahmatullah Al-Hindi, an Indian Muslim, written in response to a well-known missionary publication on Islam, Dr Pfander's *The Balance of Truth* (Blyden 1887:3).

Although Christian missions were concerned about the influence of Islam, they, in actual fact, concentrated their efforts mostly on areas where Islam had little or no impact. According to Crampton, for example, the Church Missionary Society never had "the human and financial resources for extensive work in the Northern Emirates" of Nigeria, where the Islamic influence was strong (Crampton 1978: 71). This phenomenon of withdrawal from the encounter with Muslims is indeed another aspect of the Christian approach in this period. On the Muslim side also, such a reaction of withdrawal could be observed. There, each community tended to live its own life without really acknowledging the existence of the other (Sanneh 1976; Bone 1984: 18, 19).

4. The realities of the encounter. In African traditional society, the approach to religion was inclusive rather than exclusive. In 1769, for instance, a king of Sierra Leone sent one son to England to learn about Christianity, and another son to Futa Jallon in Guinea to study Islam (Sanneh 1983: 130).

The traditional oracle of the Yoruba in Nigeria could declare, on the one hand, that certain children were destined to become Muslims, and on the other, that Christian missionaries should be allowed to settle in Ibadan in spite of the objections of the local

Muslims (Gbadamosi, 1978: 92, 126, 127). This inclusive approach is related to the African understanding of human life as being a life in community (Oduyoye 1979: 110, 111). It is this sense of community, no doubt, which, in the last decade of the nineteenth century, enabled Anglican clergymen in Lagos to study not only Arabic but also Islam under the direction of local bilingual Muslim teachers (Gbadamosi 1978: 129). Living in close contact with Muslims, such Nigerian Christian leaders expressed their appreciation of the African character of Islam, of its spirit of self-reliance and the absence of racialism and clericalism among Yoruba Muslims. These characteristics of Islam were regarded as being exemplary for Christians (Gbadamosi 1978: 143, 144). In line with Yoruba cultural values, courtesy and a sense of moderation mostly prevailed in the relations between Christians and Muslims. However, this courtesy did not affect these Christians' deep commitment to evangelism, and also the Muslims remained adamant and assertive about their religion and faith (Gbadamosi 1978: 146, 147). In western Nigeria, Muslims initially watched the advent of Christianity with caution and put up a sort of passive resistance. Later, they became increasingly responsive to the Christian presence, ready to engage in public discussions, which were generally good-natured; they also grew less suspicious of modern education (Sanneh 1983: 217-219).

Not only the traditional African sense of community, but also nationalistic feelings brought together African Christians and Muslims. Dr Edward Blyden, a nineteenth-century educationist, who for some time served as minister in the Presbyterian Church in Monrovia and as a Church Missionary Society agent in Sierra Leone, is well-known for his efforts to create modern educational institutions for the advancement of the African people. As a nationalist, he felt that both the Christian and the Muslim academic traditions should be harnessed for that purpose. He even launched the idea to establish an institute of higher Islamic learning. For this approach, though, he found more sympathy with the colonial governors than with the leadership of the missions (Sanneh 1983: 214-220; Blyden 1887).

5. Insights from this period. On the whole, missionaries responded to the Muslim presence in Africa in a spirit of conflict and rivalry. This attitude also had a very significant impact on the Christian communities that came into existence. However, encounters were not only determined by the traditional confrontational relationship between Christianity and Islam. As sons and daughters of Africa, sharing life in community and living in the same colonial situation, Christians and Muslims often maintained good personal relations; these were much more respectful and cordial than one would expect, judging by official pronouncements.

IV. Post-independence developments 1960-1975

Around 1960, many countries in sub-Saharan Africa attained their political independence. It was the beginning of a new era in the history of that part of the world, a time of renewal and of hope for a better future. Leaders everywhere emphasized the need for national unity: people from different linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds were to work hand in hand to build the new Africa.

At that time, the Christian community gave much thought to the future role of the church in Africa. Among the issues considered, was that of the relationship between Christians and Muslims.² In Protestant circles, a process of consultation on this particular matter led in 1959 to what was then called the "Islam in Africa Project" (IAP) (Crossley 1972; Haafkens 1981).³ Following

² For example, an All Africa Church Conference was held in Ibadan, Nigeria, in 1958. The resulting report was entitled: *The Church in Changing Africa*. In 1960, the Christian Council of Nigeria commissioned a study which resulted in a 126-page report on *Christian Responsibility in an Independent Nigeria*.

³ In 1987, the name of the organization was changed to "Project for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa" (PROCMURA).

thorough discussions which extended over many years, the purpose of the project was formulated as follows: "To keep before the Churches in Africa their responsibility for understanding Islam and the Muslims of their region in view of the Churches' task of interpreting faithfully in the Muslim world the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

In these discussions a significant role was played by Dr W.A. Bijlefeld, who lived in Nigeria from 1959-1966 and served the project, in a central coordinating capacity, as leader of its team of advisors and, since 1965, as director of its study center in Ibadan.

Under the responsibility of IAP Area Committees in Sierra Leone, Ghana, Benin, Nigeria, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya and Malawi, training programs were organized which were highly appreciated in the churches. In a number of countries, Muslims kindly agreed to come to IAP seminars to help participants gain a better understanding of Islam. Several little books were published by IAP advisors, such as: *Islam and Christianity: 90 Questions and Answers* (original French title: *On the Doorstep of Islam*) (Abd el Massih 1965; Abd-ul-Masih 1967). Another publication was entitled *Christian Witness among Muslims*. The type of relationship with Muslims that was advocated by the project is reflected in the words of an Anglican clergyman, the Rev. F.O. Segun (who was to become Bishop of Lagos), quoted in the 1962 report *Christian Responsibility in an Independent Nigeria* (p. 94): "The approach . . . should always be by love, by readiness for a deeper understanding of each other's point of view, and above all, by living what we profess and leaving the issues in God's hands."

It is important to note that the IAP program was not just a matter of a few concerned persons. It was developed in Africa in an extensive process of consultation and found the ready welcome and support of Protestant churches on the African continent. This certainly did not imply that the old attitudes of suspicion, which would lead to confrontation or withdrawal, had

suddenly disappeared. It meant that a reorientation was taking place within the churches. The reflection about Christian-Muslim relations was taking a new direction, moving its primary focus away from rivalry and conflict to an emphasis on life in community, and on shared responsibility for the future of Africa. Positive experiences of day-to-day encounters and cooperation, not new as such, were taken into account more and more, as Christians reconsidered their relationship with Muslims.

This reorientation did not only occur in Protestant communities. In French-speaking West Africa, where most Christians belong to the Roman Catholic Church, the Regional Episcopal Conference set up a "Commission on [other] Religions". This happened while the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) was still in session. The dogmatic "Constitution of the Church" of 1964 and the 1965 "Declaration on the Relations of the Church with the Non-Christian Religions" were major incentives leading to the establishment of this commission. The Constitution mentions Muslims as people "who profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and worship with us the One, Merciful God, who will judge mankind on the last day". The Declaration states explicitly: "The Church has also a high regard for the Muslims." Speaking about Christian-Muslim relations, the Declaration says: "Over the centuries many quarrels and dissensions have arisen between Christians and Muslims. The Sacred Council now pleads with all to forget the past, and urges that a sincere effort be made to achieve mutual understanding; for the benefit of all men, let them together preserve and promote peace, liberty, social justice and moral values."

A number of Catholic missionaries in West Africa warmly welcomed these statements because they found in them a reflection of their own experiences, *in loco*, of encounters with Muslims (Stamer 1987: 18-20). As P. Clarke rightly states, the Declaration was in some measure a vindication of the efforts of both Christians and Muslims, in Senegal and elsewhere in West Africa, to encourage dialogue between their respective faiths (Clarke 1983: 3). In 1969, the Episcopal Conference appointed a

special commission to deal with Christian-Muslim relations. This commission developed training programs which were in many ways similar to those of the IAP. Among other things, the commission prepared a clear and simple presentation of Islam for African Christians, under the French title *Connais-tu ton frère?* (Do you know your brother?) translated into English as *Let us understand each other*.

In Nigeria, Father Victor Chukwulozie has been involved in the organization of Christian-Muslim encounters since 1962. On his initiative, a meeting of Roman Catholic and Muslim leaders took place in Ibadan in 1974 (Chukwulozie 1986: 70 ff.). However, French-speaking West Africa was the only region on the continent where the Roman Catholic Church formally developed a program bearing on Christian-Muslim relations. We can conclude that in the Roman Catholic Church in West Africa definite steps were taken to move from confrontation to dialogue. As on the Protestant side, this did not imply that the problems of the past no longer existed, but that efforts were being made to see the Christian-Muslim relationship in a new light (Stamer 1987: 21, 22).

For a better understanding of what happened to the Christian-Muslim relationship in that period, it is useful to consider specific developments within the Christian and Muslim communities. Within the churches, serious efforts were made to make Christianity more relevant to African realities. Traditional African culture and religion as well as national life were taken into consideration. Very significant in this respect is the title of a book by Professor E. Bolaji Idowu, *Towards an Indigenous Church*. The book is based on a series of radio talks given in Nigeria in 1961. The awareness that the church had something important to learn from the traditional African understanding of life certainly contributed to the new approach to Christian-Muslim relations in Christian circles.

Within the Muslim community, developments during that period were largely a continuation of what had been begun during the colonial period: The further development of structures and insti-

tutions to enhance the life of the community in the new society. There was a strong emphasis on providing modern education in a specifically Islamic environment. In Nigeria, Muslim societies such as the *Ansar-ud-Deen*, founded in 1923, the *Nawair-ud-Deen*, founded in the thirties, and the *Jama'atu Nasril Islam* were particularly active in this respect. A Muslim Women's Society, founded in 1958, called *Isabatudeen*, established a Muslim Girls' Grammar School in 1964 in Ibadan (Doi 1978: 336; Oyelade 1984). Islamic literature was being published in English and French. Translations of the Qur'an were widely distributed. Muslim women's, youth and students' organizations became very active. Missionary work was undertaken, efforts were made to establish national Muslim organizations, and international relations were strengthened (Doi 1978: 338, 339, 346-50). Even the traditional Muslim understanding of the relationship between God and human beings was changing. Now, the emphasis was more on human responsibility than on God's omnipotence (Doi 1978: 343, 344). Such changes appeared to make Islam more similar to Christianity than it had been in the past, and did not really jeopardize the hope for increasingly harmonious Christian-Muslim relations.

The following was said in a report with the title *Christian Responsibility in an Independent Nigeria* in 1962: "As independence approached, there were deep-seated fears on the part of the Christian population regarding their future in the 'Muslim' North" (p. 89). In the report a description of the situation was given and the hope expressed that real political freedom and economic progress would materialize there. In the period under consideration, Christian fears about Islam were allayed by a number of factors. Around 1960, the feeling was widespread among Christians in Africa that the Muslims' numerical growth was far outstripping their own; however, further studies, especially those published by D. Barrett, showed that in fact there was much more of a balance (Gilliland 1986: 169-72). In the political field, the Nigerian civil war (1967-1970) did not lead to a general polarization between Christians and Muslims, and after the war, a considerable effort was made towards national reconciliation. In

1972, a peace accord was concluded in Sudan, which raised hopes for the peaceful coexistence of Christians and Muslims in a country which had been ravaged by civil war. A country like Senegal, with a large Muslim majority, remained peaceful under a Christian president (Léopold Sédar Senghor). Likewise, peace reigned under the Muslim president Ahmadu Ahidjo in Cameroon—a country where Christians constitute a majority.

In 1974, Dr Musa Abdul of the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Ibadan co-chaired a WCC-organized dialogue meeting at the University of Legon in Ghana and presented a paper entitled "A Community of Religions" in which he stated: "I regard every Christian as brother/sister and fellow seeker in an identical quest and a comrade against materialism and its concomitant evils" (Mala 1984: 14). Indeed, there were signs of hope for an improvement in Christian-Muslim relations.

V. Islamic revival

Whereas the 1960s were years of optimism about the future of Africa, there is today a widespread feeling of crisis on the African continent.

Many of the hopes of the sixties did not materialize. That is one of the reasons why the Western democratic principles on which the new African nations were based are coming under serious criticism in certain Muslim circles. In 1975, A.R.I. Doi wrote that Nigerian Muslim scholars who had gone to Europe or America for higher education, often came back with a much greater degree of modern Islam-consciousness. In spite of their acceptance of Western values, they engaged in a subsequent apologetic and controversialist dialogue, attacking Western culture, Western secularism and thereby created an offensive mood towards the West (Doi 1975: 342). Muslim intellectuals such as these will emphasize that Islam is the only way and that the Law of Islam is the only viable basis for a modern state. Not only do they reject Western democracy and Marxism, but also the traditional African

concepts of community life. Actually, there are significant parallels between these ideas and the principles applied by the revolutionary founders of the Islamic states in West Africa in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. These voices are not only heard in Nigeria (Kenny 1986; Onaiyekan 1987) and in the Sudan, where the National Islamic Front is an articulate protagonist of *shari'ah* laws, but also in Senegal and elsewhere.

Radical Muslim authors, such as Sayyid Kutb, who belonged to the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, and Al-Maududi from Pakistan, are widely read among Muslims in Africa. In a Kenyan textbook on Islam for secondary schools and teacher training colleges, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Al-Maududi's *Jama'at Islami* are presented as exemplary movements (Quraishy 1987: 301-312). The Islamic Revolution in Iran has given a new impetus to the advocates of the *shari'ah* as the basis of national life. Christians who have adopted the principle of a state which is neutral in religious matters, generally reject these ideas which, in their view, lead to the inequality before the law of citizens of different religious persuasions. It can be said that, in a sense, the matter of the *shari'ah* has taken many Christians by surprise. They have begun to discover that there are important groups of Muslims who do not accept the consensus on statehood reached at the time of independence.

In fact, this issue is not merely a theoretical one. Considerable tension arose in Nigeria around 1978, when the place of the *shari'ah* in the national constitution was being discussed. Since then, frictions between Christians and Muslims have been on the increase, and there are signs of a polarization along religious lines in the country. There were several outbursts of violence in Kano (1982) as well as in Kaduna State (1987), involving the loss of human life and the destruction of property, including church buildings.

Sudan saw the breakdown of the 1972 peace accord and the renewed outbreak of civil war. Certainly the problem of regionalism was a major cause there, but the introduction of the *shari'ah* laws in 1983 became an important issue in the conflict. Op-

ponents of the *shari'ah* saw it as an instrument of Islamization and Arabization. Tension did not run as high as in Senegal, but reports that radical Muslim preachers have been warning Muslims in villages to guard their own identity and not to befriend Christians are a cause for worry. Such a development seems to jeopardize previously harmonious relationships.

The rising tide of Muslim radicalism in Africa, which receives significant support from outside the continent, does have an impact on the way Christians view their relationship with Muslims. Those who had hoped that rivalry and conflict would gradually decrease are faced with the question, whether this will actually be so.

There are indeed many factors that complicate relations. Apart from radicalism, in some areas the socio-economic and political differences between Christians and Muslims are developing a religious dimension. Moreover, Islam and Christianity are both missionary religions. Within the two communities, but generally outside Africa, plans continue to be formulated to transform Africa either into a Muslim or into a Christian continent. Mutual awareness of such plans, inevitable in the world of today, is creating suspicion and increasing tension, especially when local communities are identified, often without justification, with such plans.

VI. Conclusion

After independence, there was a widespread feeling that Christian-Muslim relations were moving in a new direction and that there was a turn for the better. Within African society and within the two religious communities resources were identified which would enhance such a development. Now it has become evident that considerable effort is needed to maintain the momentum towards a more harmonious relationship.

These resources are still at our disposal and there are signs of hope. Christian-Muslim dialogue continues. Last year, at a Christian-Muslim colloquium organized by the World Council of

Churches in Arusha, Tanzania, there were moments of great tension. However, under the wise leadership of the Rt. Rev. Dr Michael Keili, an Anglican bishop from Sierra Leone, and of His Excellency Badru Kateregga, Ambassador of Uganda in Saudi Arabia, a Muslim, there was no break in relations. Thus, the final report on the meeting could state: "The spirit of the colloquium throughout the meeting was cordial, and one which showed willingness to accommodate each other's views" ("A Christian-Muslim Colloquium in Tanzania", p. 17).

The Rt. Rev. John Onaiyekan, one of the leading Nigerian Roman Catholic theologians, concludes his article about the *shari'ah* in Nigeria as follows: "God did not make a mistake when he put us all together here in one geographical zone. Since we all invoke Him, albeit under various Names, we must meet the challenge we have assumed to live in unity and harmony as one indissoluble Sovereign Nation under God [a reference to the Nigerian constitution]. This is a duty we owe to ourselves, to the coming generations, to mankind, and to God Himself" (Onaiyekan 1987: 15). When Christian-Muslim relations in Africa are approached in this spirit, there is indeed hope for the future.

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Christian-Muslim Relations in the Middle East

An Update

A call from the minaret evokes very different feelings in a Christian, depending on historical and personal experiences. Let me illustrate this with two brief examples! Last year I celebrated Easter with Coptic-Orthodox friends in Egypt. The service on Good Friday begins at seven o'clock in the morning and continues throughout the day. We went to worship in Heliopolis, a suburb of Cairo. The church was crowded, but peaceful; young and old, peasants, students and white-collar workers were sitting in quiet meditation, small children asleep on the laps of their parents. The priest and deacons were performing the rich, age-old liturgy commemorating Christ's suffering and death. Suddenly, there was a burst of electronic noise: the loudspeakers on the nearby mosque were getting ready for the *gum'a* prayer. Soon the entire neighborhood, including the church, was filled with the voice of the *muazzin* and—after a while—the preacher, *wa'iz*, was stretching the capacity of the electronic amplifier to the verge of distortion. Although the mosque was indeed rather close to the church building, I found it difficult to understand why the church seemed to be the focus of the call from the minaret. But when I stepped outside to look, the explanation was obvious: the loudspeakers were actually oriented directly towards the church and not, as one would have expected, towards the surrounding residential area. The impression of local Islam this left on me was an ambiguous one. On the one hand, it was greatly annoying to see how Muslims were misusing their majority position to harass the Christian minority; on the other hand this naive

display of force appeared to stem from a basic lack of self-confidence. On that day it was certainly easier to perceive God in the silent whisper of the praying Coptic congregation than in the thundering voices coming from the *ma'zana* loudspeakers.

A few days later, I went to Bir Zeit, situated at the very heart of the West Bank; the Palestinian university was still closed at that time. The township of Bir Zeit, known as a stronghold for the Palestinian identity, has a fairly strong Christian minority. Under the occupation, and especially during the intifada, the inhabitants — both Christians and Muslims — have been subjected to harassments by the Israeli forces and have shared many hardships: power cuts and interrupted telephone lines, road blocks, military raids and sudden arrests. Thus, the local people perceive the tolling of the church bells or the call of the *muazzin* as two expressions of one common purpose: to maintain and proclaim the cultural identity of Palestinian Arabs against the Israeli forces. I even heard a young Christian Palestinian complain that the church was too low-key in comparison to the mosque: "When I hear the '*azan*' echo across the valleys, so that the military jeeps just cannot escape hearing too, I just wish we Christians would be as outspoken and clear in proclaiming our enduring presence here as the Muslims. Anyway, I feel proud that the call from the minaret fills the air with clear Arabic! Because I, too, am an Arab!"

The region

The Middle East can be described as a field of constant tension — some would say: a battlefield. Although the actors on the Middle-Eastern stage have varied, one may say today that four major agents, or powers, dominate the region:

Egypt, with its rich cultural heritage, is the main producer of films, television programs, books and music for the Arab world, but it suffers from economic problems and from an explosive growth of its population (plus one million per 10 months). Hundreds of thousands of Egyptian guest workers fill gaps in neighboring countries, e.g., in the Gulf states.

Iran has about the same population as Egypt (just below 60 million, mostly Shiites). It combines rich natural resources with a fairly high literacy rate. Thus Iran has both the people and the money to enforce its policies in the region; it should be noted that the statistical balance between Sunnis and Shiites in the Middle East is different from the Muslim world at large, since the majority in Iran and in some neighboring countries (like Kuwait and Iraq) together make up about 30 per cent of the Middle-Eastern Muslims.

Saudi Arabia is new as a nation state, with a small indigenous population. However, owing to its enormous financial wealth, the kingdom has the power to influence policies in many poorer Muslim countries, a fact that may lead to obvious and covert dependencies.

Israel, the youngest of the four states, may not appear as a major power in its own right. But being the most-favored ally of the USA and supported by many powerful international groups, Israel represents a considerable influence in the politics of the Middle-East; this was evident in the wars of 1967, 1973 and 1982 (Lebanon).

The Christians

Since 1975, Christians in the Middle East have a meeting place in the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), uniting the major church families: Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Protestant and, since 1990, Catholic (including the Uniates), totaling a membership of about 13 million Christians with different languages for worship: Arabic, Syriac and Armenian, for instance. (All statistics about religious communities in the Middle East are somewhat doubtful, since the figures are invariably used for political purposes . . .) One of the most important tasks of the MECC is to find ways for the peaceful encounter, cooperation and even debate between Christians and Muslims. This has been successful in the fields of education and health care, less so in theology and national politics.

Except in Lebanon, Christians in the Middle East have always lived as minorities, in a "pre-Constantinian" situation, i.e., without access to political or military power. Thus they have had to devise different strategies for survival, such as providing sought-after services to the local community (medical expertise), building independent economic infrastructures (Christian villages in the Osman era), establishing links with the powers that be (Iran yesterday, Iraq and Syria today), and—if all else fails—emigration.

It should be remembered, however, that throughout their history of endurance in suffering, the Middle-Eastern churches have always been able to count on a number of committed believers, who, braving all threats and persecutions, chose to witness with their lives, as martyrs. Some Christians in that region say that the church has survived there thanks to the blood of these martyrs. (We recommend that those who have followed the recent developments in Iraq read the history of the Early Church of the East as set out in the Chronicle of Martyrs in Persia, where Christians were asked to choose between God and the Great King, Shapur.)

Examples from some countries:

Egypt

Many phenomena are common to all or most Middle-Eastern countries; therefore we shall deal with Egypt in some detail, by way of illustrating a few important trends. We do not intend to give a balanced overall picture of contemporary Egyptian society—that would require a book of its own, just like any other topic in this paper . . .

There are about seven million Coptic Christians in Egypt (12-13 per cent of the total population), accounting for more than 50 per cent of all Christians in the Middle East. No less than 1.5 million Copts are said to have emigrated during this century. But the Christians of Egypt enjoy a stability of residence hardly known by other Middle-Eastern Christians, many of whom have been on the move for generations. There, as elsewhere in the

Arab world, many Christian intellectuals were active in the anti-colonial movement and felt strongly about the secular state. In the early days of the revolution (after 1956) their position was rather secure, although some important infrastructures were broken up by the nationalization of real estate. An important event took place in April 1968, when the Virgin Mary appeared in Cairo, consoling many Egyptians, both Christian and Muslim (including President Gamal Abd-an-Nasir) after the 1967 defeat. However, as governmental policies increasingly frustrated the Muslim Brotherhood, especially during President as-Sadat's time of office, the situation became more precarious. Christians had always been suspected of having hidden loyalties to the West, especially in colonial times (under French and British domination). The Islamic opposition accused the Copts of maneuvering the secularist government into an all-out alliance with the USA (and by extension: with Israel), thereby betraying the Arab cause, which was identified by these Islamicists as being an Islamic cause.

These accusations were formulated in theological terms by new militant groups who, exasperated with the parliamentary approach of the present-day Muslim Brotherhood (founded in 1927 by Hasan al-Banna), propagate violent political action. The most influential of these Islamicist groups (in Egypt alone, more than 90 such organizations are known) is probably the Islamic Jihad (*jihad*), basically a youth movement, with followers among both university students and rural workers. The Jihad was behind the assassination of President as-Sadat and the Coptic Bishop Samuel in 1981; their rationale was that they first had to kill the Pharaoh (the president) and his allies (the church) before the Prophet (Islam) could be liberated. Another incident, which received little attention outside Egypt, was the occupation of the Ayn Shams University campus by a group of young Muslim students, led by a self-appointed *amir*, who proclaimed the area to be an Islamic republic. It took the security forces weeks to dislodge the heavily-armed occupants.

A controversial innovation was introduced by followers of the leader of the Jihad, Sheikh Abd-ar-Rahman, namely a new interpretation of the Qur'anic concept of *Ahl-al-Kitab*. This concept has hitherto supplied a theological foundation for limited religious freedom and coexistence between Muslims on the one hand, and Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians on the other. Now, the Jihad movement claims that only Muslims are truly "people of the Book", which would mean, for instance, that marriage between a Muslim man and a Christian woman is not acceptable. Militant—often unemployed—young Muslims are encouraged to "cleanse" Egypt from the Christian infidels, a mission attempted several times during the 1980s, e.g., in Asyut and Minya, where more than a dozen Coptic merchants were robbed and killed. A similar tragic incident occurred in May 1992, when thirteen Copts were killed in Bayrut by the Gama'a Islamiyya. In addition, systematic efforts were made to force young Copts to convert to Islam; these often resulted in personal tragedies, ranging from forced emigration to suicide.

Fortunately, this trend towards militancy and fanaticism does not seem to reach beyond the relatively small circle of a few dissatisfied groups; however, some of the most aggressive Muslim preachers, such as Sheikhs Abd-ar-Rahman and Mahalawy, have travelled abroad and spread their message among Muslims in Europe and the USA. One very influential contemporary Muslim preacher, Sheikh Kishk, is renowned for his militant attitude towards Christianity; his followers are permitted to proclaim his teachings weekly on national television. Generally speaking, Islamic festivals receive extensive media coverage, especially during Ramadan, when the daily newspapers devote whole sections to quotations from and interpretations of the Qur'an, whereas little space is given to Christian festivals.

This observation highlights a kind of quiet, structural discrimination with which it is much harder to deal than with militant sheikhs and assassins. The most obvious example is the uneven ratio of mosques vs churches built since 1971. First, it is extremely difficult for the church to buy land or to obtain official

permission for erecting a church on the land it owns. Second, no permission is required to build a mosque—on the contrary: a builder who includes even the most minuscule mosque in a construction plan is favored by the tax laws. Third, when building a church a certain distance from the nearest mosque must be respected. Thus, it is not uncommon that a small mosque suddenly appears—as if over night—where a church is being built, making it impossible to complete the construction of the church.

Despite many such frustrations, the Coptic Christians are engaged in a systematic effort to build or uphold good relations with the Muslim community. Most effective is, perhaps, what is known as "witness through service", diaconal work (such as village health projects, vocational training centres, rural development programs, etc.), which is aimed as much at Muslims as at Christians. Two such programs have been so successful that the government has adopted them as national development programs: the literacy campaign (originally called "learn and be liberated", now renamed "wipe out illiteracy"), mainly directed at teen-age village girls without formal education, and the family planning program. The good will created by such non-parochial services is considerable and a strong counterforce to sectarianism.

Palestine

The number of Christians in East Jerusalem is now thought to be under 7000, and the total church membership in the Holy Land is perhaps 70,000, although accelerated emigration resulting from the Gulf War may have reduced that number. Over the past decades 11 out of 12 monasteries closed down, and the status quo of Christian historical places in Jerusalem has repeatedly been threatened.

Initially, the Intifada brought Christian and Muslim Palestinians together, but the PLO-friendly Unified Leadership has gradually given way to HAMAS, the Islamic Resistance Movement, and, more recently, to the Islamic Jihad. This increasing Islamic confessionalism tends to reduce the role traditionally played by the

Christian Palestinians. It is claimed that the Israeli authorities try to divide and rule, by covertly supporting the HAMAS against the PLO camp. This surge in Islamism is mirrored by a similar, though less widely spread, confessionalism among Israeli Jews.

But the local Palestinian economy (Gaza and the West Bank) has also suffered as a result of the many strikes and countermeasures during the three-and-a-half years of Intifada. Besides, the Gulf War, which for the Palestinians meant a long series of curfews, has damaged the economy even more. This provides an added impetus for unemployed young Palestinian Christians to emigrate, especially those with higher education.

In this situation, a group of young Palestinian theologians—all trained in Europe—have set out to write and implement a contextual theology for Palestine, sometimes called the "Intifada Theology". Geris Khoury, Mitri ar-Raheb and Naim Ateek are among those who take up the central themes of liberation theology—Exodus and the Cross—and apply it to the birthplace of Christianity. One of their theological workshops, the al-Liqa Centre, is also a meeting place where Muslim intellectuals from the area come to debate issues of common concern, e.g., the brain drain caused by emigration, the deterioration of the Palestinian Arab culture under occupation, etc.

Lebanon

When the (in)famous popular census of 1957 was taking place, the Lebanese Muslims probably already outnumbered the Christians. But neither the well-to-do Maronites nor their Sunni friends could foresee the rapid population growth among the poorest classes in Lebanese society, the Shiites, nor the developments that would lead to the heavy influx of Palestinian refugees after 1967. The precarious balance of power based on statistics was upset many times over, and the old order broke down with a crash in 1975. For the Christians in the Middle East the Lebanese tragedy is particularly painful, since Lebanon was the only state that approached the vision of a Christian state—or at

least of a pluralistic society, where Christians played a leading role. The Jews achieved their dream of a Jewish state in 1947. The concept of political incarnation (Hebrew *hagshama*) is vital also for Muslims; it became miraculously fulfilled in Iran 1979. Nowhere in the Middle East did the Christians stand a better chance than in Lebanon, and nowhere else have sectarianism and class structures resulted in a more depressing situation for the Christian churches.

Yet, there are Lebanese Muslims—including Shiite intellectuals—who do not hesitate to invite Christians for dialogue. But to understand the dynamics behind this opening, we must first look briefly at Syria and Iran.

Syria

The regime of Hafiz al-Asad builds on a religious minority, the Alawites. These consider themselves as Shiites; they were formerly poor village people oppressed by richer Sunnis and even by Christians. Asad succeeded in linking up with the Islamic government in Tehran, thereby frustrating the Sunni opposition in Syria. In 1983, al-Asad had thousands of Muslim Brothers killed in Hamah, without a word of reproach from Khomeini. Those who believed that the regime in Iran would support Islamicist movements everywhere, whether Sunnites or Shiites, were bitterly disappointed. Instead, Iran and Syria founded their alliance with a common enemy in mind, Iraq. The Syrian minority regime survives by exercising military repression and through seeking allies among other minorities, such as Christians. Since freedom of speech is curbed and the secret police feared, open dialogue between Christians and Muslims tends to remain on a rhetorical level. (For instance, the chief mufti in Damascus, Ahmad Kiftaru, has taken several initiatives for dialogue with Western Christians; whether dialogue on the local level can actually take off, remains to be seen.) It is important for al-Asad, however, to create a positive image among Christians, since Syria is now in control of northern Lebanon, and enjoys the more or less reluc-

tant support of at least half of the Lebanese Christians. The other half—sympathizers of general Aoun—are strongly opposed to the Syrian occupation (but less so to the Israeli occupation) and many of them have emigrated since the fighting has stopped.

Iran

The earthquake in the northern province of Gilan (famous for its short history of political independence as a socialist republic) in 1989 brought speedy help from international NGOs, not especially from the Christian relief organizations. That may have been an eye-opener for the pragmatic regime of A.A.H. Rafsanjani, which has since then taken several steps to establish good relations with Christian communities. In 1990, the Armenian catholicos, Karekin II (formerly Bishop of Isfahan) was invited to celebrate Christmas with his Persian flock, the largest remaining church in Iran, numbering about 250,000. Later, the MECC secretary general visited ministers in Tehran, exploring the possibilities of church-funded educational projects. In October 1990 a delegation from a German university met colleagues at the University of Tehran to discuss the "different views in Christianity and Islam regarding Human Rights". It should be remembered that it was the Iranian regime who ordered, only eleven years ago, that the Islamic declaration (and other documents on the theme of Islam and Human Rights) be withdrawn.

These recent developments have had an impact on groups outside Iran, such as the Hizbollahis and other Shiite militias, who are dependent on Iran's financial and political support. It may also affect the attitude of Shiite intellectuals such as university teachers in Beirut, at least to the effect of not unnecessarily affronting the Christians.

Nevertheless one should not be led to think that Iran has given up the vision of extending its political influence beyond its present borders, e.g., into southern Iraq, the Gulf or even the Muslim part of the Soviet Union. Being the only truly Islamic state gives Iran enormous prestige all over the Muslim world;

there is also a practical heritage from Khomeini in terms of Sunni-Shii ecumenism (*harakat-at-taqrib*), which provides the government in Tehran with the universalist tools needed to influence Sunni majority regions.

Iraq

The largest church in Iraq, the Chaldean (about 400,000 members), retains close ties with the Baathist regime in Baghdad, although not all churches in Iraq enjoy the same privileges. Christian intellectuals were among the founding fathers of the Baath movement (such as Michel Aflaq in Syria), and Christians have often held important political positions. In April 1980, a group of militant Muslims from the Basrah province, the Islamic Daawa, tried to assassinate the then vice prime minister, Tariq Aziz, a Chaldean. The rationale was the same as in Egypt, 18 months later; Pharaoh and his counselors must die in order for Musa to be free . . . That there is a real understanding between church and state in Iraq is testified by the Patriarch of Babylon, Bidawid, who speaks of Saddam Hussein as "a real gentleman; we have no problems . . ."

Perhaps dialogue in Iraq today occurs when Christian and Muslim relief agencies cooperate to reach the needy in those areas most affected by allied bombs. But it is not easy for local Iraqi Christians to bring food and shelter to those villages in the north that were deserted by their fathers—when they were persecuted by Kurdish Muslims—and which are now inhabited by the children of those Kurds. It might, in fact, have been easier for them to help the oppositional Muslims in the southern provinces who, trapped in the marshes, were waiting for the merciless attack of the Baathist forces.

Jordan

In November 1989, free and general elections were held in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The result was a great success for the Islamic movement, both for the party and for its independent candidates. The Muslim Brotherhood claimed seven

seats in the government, among them the ministries for education and internal affairs. But it would take more than a year before King Hussein was forced by external events (the isolation of Jordan by the West during the Gulf war) to let the composition of his cabinet reflect the elections.

It would be unfair not to mention the untiring efforts of the King and his brother, Prince Hasan bin Talal, to gather Christians and Muslims, from Jordan and from abroad, for interreligious dialogue and intercultural exchange. The Al-Bait Foundation is only one of the expressions of their vision to keep religious peace in Jordan, where the Christians are almost exclusively Palestinians (mainly Greek Orthodox) and where there are so many reasons for anti-Western sentiments.

During the first two months of the Gulf crisis (August-September 1990) Jordan received and repatriated more than 700,000 migrant workers of many different nationalities who had escaped from Kuwait and Iraq. The majority returned to the Arab countries, but many had much farther to go, i.e., to Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and Thailand. It is revealing that the local Christians were the first people to recognize the plight of these refugees, who were sitting in the desert between Jordan and Iraq. The MECC alarmed the world and helped to coordinate an international program of health care and repatriation—something which the paralyzed UN was not prepared to do.

As the backyards, schools, mosques and churches were being filled with hungry and thirsty refugees from the desert, one could see an imam and a priest—each with a beard, a long gown and tears in his eyes—embrace one another in front of the reception centres. They might have remembered the Qur'anic injunction:

If God had willed, He would have made you one single community. But He wanted to test you. So vie one with another in good deeds. To God you shall all return, and He shall decide that, wherein you differed.

Amen.

The Muslims and Europe's Identity in Past and Present

A Christian Interpretation

I. Introduction

"EUROPE 92: What about the rest of the world?"—because "Most of the world's poor are in former European colonies". This title appears on the May 1991 issue of *One World*, a monthly magazine published by the World Council of Churches. I would like to add: a majority of the inhabitants of many of the former colonies are Muslims. So far, *One World* has devoted six articles to the implications, especially for the churches, of the Single European Act coming into effect in 1992. The articles in *One World* expressed justified concern about the possible negative consequences of the Single European Act, namely for migrants, minorities, seven million of whom are Muslims, for seekers of asylum and for many others. Nevertheless, many commentators are in the grip of a certain euphoria. Countless books and articles about the new Europe after 1992 are being published. Gérard Mermet calls his book: *Euroscopie* and its subtitle is: *Les Européens, qui sont-ils? Comment vivent-ils?* (Who are the Europeans, how do they live?) One question my paper is dealing with is: Can Europeans be Muslims, or can Muslims who come from outside Europe become Europeans? In other words, can Muslims identify with Europe and have they contributed to its identity? As we shall see, this question is not as farfetched as might be assumed at first glance.

But the feelings of euphoria, i.e., of exaggerated elation, considerably diminish as we think of other historical milestones related to the date of 1992. Exactly 500 years ago, the discovery of Columbus by the Indians in what we now call the Americas took place. The Indian record of the "blessings" brought by the

Europeans can only be negative, to a large extent. The majority of Indians did not survive the encounter with European "civilization". Also half a millennium ago, the last Muslim stronghold in Spain, Granada, had to surrender to the forces of the Christian *reconquista*. It is this fact, rather than the celebration of Columbus' discoveries or the unification of Spain, that has made Spanish intellectuals ponder afresh the contribution of Islam and the Muslims to the Spanish culture during the 780 years of Muslim presence and power on the Iberian peninsula.¹ Retrieval and rethinking rather than *reconquista* should, in their view, be the major item in the 1992 celebrations of *Moros y Cristianos*. Should we not ask: What has been the contribution of Muslims to European culture?

On 26 April 1991, during the annual joint meeting of the Presidium and Advisory Committee of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) in Liebfrauenberg near Strasbourg, the future of Europe and the role of the churches were discussed. Most speakers spoke about the major changes taking place in Eastern Europe, mainly in the then Soviet Union. One of CEC's presidents is Alexis II, patriarch of Moscow. Another important item on the agenda was the Fifth European Ecumenical Encounter of CEC and CCEE (Council of the European Bishops' Conferences), 13-18 November 1991, in Santiago de Compostela, the one-time spiritual headquarters of the *reconquista*. The subject of the encounter was: "At Thy Word—Mission and Evangelization in Europe Today". The chairman and the secretary of the Islam in Europe Committee of the CEC and CCEE both raised critical questions about the perimeters of this emphasis on mission and evangelization. Was the multireligious and multicultural reality in Europe sufficiently being taken into account? Would there be pleas for evangelizing the Muslims? These questions are more than mere rhetoric when, for instance, the pope speaks about the Christian identity of Europe and when Mr

¹ Oral communication made in April 1990 by Prof. Mikel de Epalza, professor of Islam in Alicante.

Gorbachev, for not quite the same reasons, promotes the idea of the common "European House". Would that really include Muslims as full citizens? In November 1986, in Tashkent, Gorbachev made some rather negative remarks about Islam.² In the debate on the place of Muslims in this common European House some assert that basically Islam is a *fremdkörper* or a subversive force.³ According to the proponents of this view, Islam was always an outsider and a threat to European security. I refer for example to a lecture on Luther and Erasmus, given on 10 November 1983 in the Boymans Museum in Rotterdam by Prof. Dr C.W. Mönnich, a Lutheran church historian; in that context the question of European security vis-à-vis the Ottoman empire was touched upon.⁴ More recently, Archbishop Henri Teissier of Algeria, whom one can certainly not accuse of being a scare-monger, who is, on the contrary, a great promoter of dialogue, has asked: *Faut-il craindre l'islam?* (Is there reason to fear Islam?)⁵ He states: "For many Muslims today, the actual progress of Islam in Europe, in a context where Christianity is losing its influence on society, is the sign that the time has come for this amazing expansion to win against the northern Mediterranean countries and the West." The feeling expressed in this Muslim opinion echoes Ameer Ali's disappointment at the Muslim armies' failure to defeat Charles Martel at Poitiers in 732.⁶ Ameer Ali, the great Indian apologist of Muhammad and Islam, saw his religion essentially as a conquering faith and would certainly not have been satisfied with the *dhimmi* status (in reverse) which, as some Muslims in Europe are claiming, would be better than their present situation. Archbishop Teissier,

2 "Moscow worries about the growing population of Soviet Muslims." Time, Jan. 12, 1987.

3 Jacques Ellul, *La subversion du christianisme* (Paris: Seuil, 1984), chapter V on Islam.

4 This lecture, as far as I know, has never been published.

5 *La Documentation catholique*, Paris (September 1990), No. 2012.

6 Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam* (London, 1922) and many reprints; the reference to Poitiers is on p. 398 of the 1946 edition.

however, tries to counter the above argument by reminding his readers that Europe expanded at the expense of Islam, and that a deep identity crisis has thus originated which survives in the "fundamentalisms" of today. Fundamentalists, be they Christians, Jews or Muslims, in Gilles Kepel's view, are always out to reconquer the lost territory, both in religious and political terms.⁷ Teissier, unlike the Christian fundamentalists, believes that a better way to overcome mutual fear is through encounters where both the theological (doctrinal) and the political challenges are discussed (e.g., human rights) which both Christians and Muslims are facing today.⁸

II. History's lessons for today's challenges

In this paper I would like to make a historical approach to some of the questions raised in the introduction. There is a practical reason for this: In two previous papers, published under the auspices of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in 1987 and 1990 respectively I already dealt with today's Islam in Europe as a challenge for the churches.⁹ A new approach is therefore of greater interest. Moreover, a book is forthcoming about Islam and Muslims in Europe and how Europeans have been reacting to this presence, which is for many a new experience.¹⁰ Thirdly, so many other publications on specific

⁷ Gilles Kepel, *La revanche de Dieu: Chrétiens, juifs et musulmans à la reconquête du monde* (Paris: Seuil, 1991).

⁸ Cf. C. Bouma, "Islam, Christianity and Human Rights: Consequences for Minorities", in *JIMNA* (Journal, Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs), 10, 2 (1990).

⁹ J. Slomp, "Muslim Minorities in Europe" in *Living among Muslims: Experiences and Concerns* (Geneva: John Knox Series, 1987), pp.133-146, and J. Slomp, "Issues between Christians and Muslims in Europe" in *My Neighbour is Muslim: A Handbook for Reformed Churches* (Geneva: John Knox Series, 1990), pp. 27-33.

¹⁰ J. Nielsen (of the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslims Relations in Birmingham), "Muslims in Western Europe", *Islamic Surveys* series (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992), 192 pp.

countries and topics related to the presence of Muslims in Europe have recently been published that it seemed superfluous to try to summarize them.¹¹ The approach I propose has the benefit of dealing with some aspects and dimensions which, as far as I know, have not yet been treated by others in this way and in this context. I hope it will help to uncover some of the deep historical roots of the problems we face today; at the same time it will tackle the prejudices and misunderstandings vis-à-vis Islam. For the sake of brevity, I will mainly take my examples from the history of Christian thought. But where are we to find the historical paradigms which may help to understand today's situation? We have observed during the last decade that every time Islam made its way into the headlines a flood of new publications reached the bookstores. This was so in 1979, when Khomeini drove the Shah out of Iran. When Benazir Bhutto came to power in Pakistan, the discussion on the position of Muslim women was stimulated. An upsurge of interest for Islamic topics could again be noticed during the Rushdie affair and the Gulf crisis. Can this observation be projected backwards in history with regard to Christian-Muslim relations in Europe? Full of surprises as history may be, people seem to react similarly in similar circumstances. Long periods of intensive contacts between Christians and Muslims or periods of crisis in such contacts witness an increased interest also in things Islamic, especially among the great thinkers who are contemporaries of such events. I propose to look briefly at the following periods:

(1) Spain, (2) the crusades, (3) the conquest of Constantinople (1453), (4) the Ottomans before Vienna (1529), (5) the colonial days and the Enlightenment, and (6) the modern age. The paragraphs will be of unequal length. I shall hardly at all deal with the East-European scene (Byzantium before the fall, Greece, Bulgaria, Russia), which has been so well covered already by, e.g., Adel Theodor Khoury (Byzantine studies) and Mark Batunsky (Russian Orthodox Missions among Muslims in Central Asia).

¹¹ E.g., the *Muslims in Europe, Research Papers*, published by the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, Birmingham.

1. Spain: The cultural and scientific impact and the martyrs.

In 711, the Europeans got Muslim neighbors who were to stay in Spain for many centuries. Spain—and for a shorter period Sicily before being reconquered by the Normans under Roger I—became the meeting point of the Muslim and West-European cultures. The symbiosis of the Arabo-Islamic and Iberian societies created a fertile soil for the far-reaching impact this new culture was to have on the development of Europe as a whole. A new element was added to the factors which were to make up the European identity; this identity could never be a static one and exclude all elements foreign to what was supposedly its essence. Can one call people or things "foreign" after they have been integrated for centuries into the fabric of European culture and life?

The Hispano-Arab contribution to Europe's future development is summarized in a quotation taken from Watt and Cachia's "A History of Islamic Spain":

While a long list can be made of particular things which Christian Europe owes to al-Andalus—a list which goes from pieces of scientific knowledge and philosophical conceptions through techniques of applied science to aspects of form in literature and the visual arts—it is important not to lose sight of the general situation. Islamic culture was the main higher culture with which Western Christendom was in direct contact for much of the period under review; and behind this culture was the most powerful political organization of which Western Christendom had experience.¹²

This experience of being inferior may be one of the reasons why during the early Middle Ages no really great thinker was born in Spain who could have dealt with Islam. The encounters took place on a more day-to-day basis, e.g., in the administration where Christians continued to serve, thus creating jealousy among lower-echelon Muslims. Religious encounters, if any, were

¹² W. Montgomery Watt and P. Cachia, "A History of Islamic Spain" in *Islamic Surveys* 4 (Edinburgh: University Press, 1965, 1967(2)), p. 172.

limited to people seeking martyrdom by abusing Islam and its Prophet.¹³ After 851, the famous Christian martyrs in Muslim Córdoba made a great impression, and that for centuries to come.¹⁴ Did they perhaps influence also Ibn Hazm (994-1064) of Córdoba, whose father was a Christian convert to Islam? In the history of the clashes between both religions, Ibn Hazm wrote the sharpest critique ever of the Bible and Christianity.¹⁵ For a true theological response on Spanish soil we have to wait until the times of Raymon Martini (*pugio fidei*), Raymond Lull and later, Juan de Segovia. It is my contention that the extent and depth of Islamic Spain's contributions to the development of Western life and thought can hardly be exaggerated. The Muslims in Spain represented the type of creative cultural minority which, according to Arnold Toynbee, was a determining force in the history of civilization. The serious research that gained momentum between the two world wars has only just begun to narrate this amazing story, the outcome of which was darkened by the events that took place between 1492 and 1640.¹⁶ That the church itself was not immune to the Muslim influence is shown by the Mozarab liturgy coming into existence and the liturgical garments with Arab calligraphy being used and even a veil for the statue of the virgin being embroidered with the *shahada* (Islamic Creed).

2. The crusades (1096-1291): Philosophical dialogue and mission. The crusades continue to be debated among those interested in promoting or rejecting the improvement of relations

13 M. de Epalza, *Jésus otage: Juifs, chrétiens et musulmans en Espagne (VIe-XVIIe s.)* (Paris: Cerf, 1987), p. 22.

14 Kenneth Baxter Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 15 ff.

15 R. Arnaldez, "Ibn Hazm", in *Encyclopædia of Islam*, 2nd edition, Volume III, s.v.

16 Louis Cardaillac, *Morisques et chrétiens, un affrontement polémique (1492-1640)* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1977). Summarized by the author of this article in *Bulletin of the Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies*, 1984.

between Christians and Muslims. We have gained much knowledge of how the Muslims viewed this period by reading the publications and translations made by Francesco Gabrieli and Amin Malouf.¹⁷ But two misunderstandings in my view still continue to impede a proper evaluation of this period. In the first place, the assumption, made for instance in publications by W. Montgomery Watt and Jacques Ellul, that the idea of "holy war" which was embodied in the crusades owed much inspiration to the doctrine of *jihad*. I doubt this equation on the grounds that the Old Testament certainly provides as much a paradigm for the crusades as the contemporary conquests of the Muslims.¹⁸ Moreover, the idea of fighting a *jihad* against the West seems to have been revived only at the end of this period.¹⁹ The second misunderstanding consists in the assumption that only by the end of the crusades authors such as Raymond Lull began to criticize these physical enterprises by saying that they were against the spirit of the gospel. It is to Julia Gauss,²⁰ a Swiss historian, that we owe the insight that a great Christian theologian had tried, already on the eve of the first crusade, to endow it with a more spiritual endeavor in its approach to Islam. Her thesis, in which she is followed, though with some hesitation,²¹ by other scholars, is that Anselm of

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- 17 F. Gabrieli, *Chroniques arabes des croisades* (Paris: Sindbad, 1977); cf. also F. Gabrieli, *Mohammed in Europa: 1300 Jahre Geschichte, Kunst, Kultur* (München: List, 1983); A. Malouf, *The Crusades Through Arab Eyes* (London: Saqi Books, 1984).
- 18 Cf. L.E. Tooms, "Ideas of War" in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), Vol. 4, pp. 796-801, which starts thus: "The concept of the holy war, declared, led and won by Yahweh himself, governs OT military thinking."
- 19 A.H. van Erp, *Gesta Francorum: Gesta Dei?* (about the crusades), (Amsterdam, 1982), p. 22.
- 20 J. Slomp, "An Early Medieval Dialogue with Islam Written by Anselm of Canterbury", in *The Bulletin of Christian Institutes of Islamic Studies*, Vol. V, Nrs 1-2 (July/Oct 1971), Hyderabad, India.
- 21 Cf. Sofia Vanni Rovighi, *Introduzione ad Anselmo d'Aosta* (Rome: Laterza, 1987), p. 11. She says that the unbelievers in *Cur Deus Homo?* are perhaps Muslims.

Canterbury's book *Cur Deus Homo?* (Why God became man) in fact contained a dialogue between a Christian and a Muslim. In a letter to the crusader Godefroy de Bouillon, Anselm called the war against the infidels a bloody affair. Godefroy had asked him for a publication in order to refute the Muslims. Anselm probably started writing *Cur Deus Homo?* after 1094. According to René Roques, who published the Latin text together with a French translation, the book was begun in 1097. It was presented to Pope Urban II, the very same who in 1096 had preached in favor of the first crusade. If Julia Gauss' thesis is true, then it can be said that the first theological response to Islam by a great theologian of the Western church took place about 150 years earlier than is usually acknowledged.²² In that case, Thomas Aquinas, who made a philosophical (*De Ente et de Essentia*) and theological (*Contra Gentiles*) approach to Islam, is preceded by Anselm of Canterbury. Such a philosophical approach had become unavoidable because of Ibn Hazm's "higher criticism"; a discourse on the basis of the scriptures had been in discredit for centuries. Another argument in favor of assuming that *Cur Deus Homo?* contained such a dialogue is the fact that the great Muslim theologians of the Middle Ages, such as Ibn Hazm, Ibn Taimiyya and Al-Ghazali, were rather well-informed about Christianity. Part of their greatness was their having a theological horizon which reached far beyond their own faith-communities. Could this not also be true for the outstanding thinker that Anselm of Aosta and Canterbury was?²³

Just after the crusades, the most important Christian scholar of Islam was no doubt the great mystic knight from Majorca, Raymond Lull (1232-1315). At his instigation, the Council of

22 R.W. Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962). Southern, though having written himself a biography of Anselm, did not notice the Muslim connection.

23 Cf. J. Slomp, "The Islamic Dimension in European Theological Studies", in K. Cracknell and Christopher Lamb, eds., *Theology on Full Alert* (British Council of Churches, 2nd edition, 1986), pp. 95-100.

Vienne (1311/12) decided to establish a chair of oriental studies at five universities. Raymond Lull died a martyr in Bougie, North Africa, following the example of his predecessors in Córdoba. The key term of his missionary method was *ratiocinatio*. But his great emphasis on love mitigated his inclination towards reasoning. He translated Al-Ghazali's *Qistas* into Catalan and wrote a book on the *Hundred Names of God*. If one can say of one missionary that he was as much influenced, if not more, by the recipients of his message than they were by him, that was Raymond Lull.²⁴

Both Anselm of Canterbury and Raymond Lull continue to fascinate modern scholars, the former because international colloquia are periodically devoted to his works, the latter because at the University of Freiburg (Germany) the Raimundus Lullus Institut has begun to edit his *Opera*/*Obres* in 50 volumes.

3. The fall of Constantinople in 1453: Critique of the Qur'an and mission. The fall of Constantinople or Byzantium, the second Rome, made an enormous impact on Western and Central Europe. Efforts to save the city were made by appealing to Western Europe and to the pope and the councils, but failed because every one of the parties concerned wanted its own benefits out of the treaties and unifications, at the expense of the Byzantine emperor and patriarch. A great theologian, Nicholas of Cusa (1401-64), was a contemporary of this event. Kues is a town on the Moselle near the oldest German city, Treves, one-time capital of the Western Roman Empire. Nicholas had been influenced by Raymond Lull and corresponded with Juan de Segovia, a scholar of Islam in Spain. The same year that Byzantium fell, Nicholas of Cusa wrote his *De pace fidei*. He was

²⁴ A. Schimmel, "Europa und der islamische Orient", in *Der Islam*, III, Annemarie Schimmel, ed. (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1990), pp. 351-353, and B.M. Weischer, *Der Islamische Einfluss in Ramon Lulls "Buch vom Liebenden und Geliebten"* [The Islamic Influence on Raymond Lull's "Book of the Lover and the Beloved"], *KAIROS* 1 (1968), pp. 19-29.

deeply shocked by this event. His colleague and friend Silvio Piccolomini, by then Pope Pius II, wrote a letter to Sultan Mehmed II, shortly before October 1461, inviting him to embrace Christianity as the true faith.²⁵ In the same period, between the beginning of 1460 and autumn 1461, Nicholas wrote his *Cribratio Alchorani* (Sieving the Qur'an). Among its main sources was Robert of Ketton's (1153) faulty Latin translation which would be printed only in 1543 in Basle. In his efforts to convert Muslims, he was looking for points of contact between these rival religions. He was tempted to read Christian meanings into the Qur'anic text, which he wanted to use as a "*manuductio ad Christum*". But this very effort, compared to those made by other medieval polemicists, was a move forward toward a better understanding of Islam. Ludwig Hagemann, whom I follow in my summary of Cusanus' thoughts on Islam, puts it this way: "The idea of concordance which permeates his whole philosophical and theological system becomes manifest also here as a stimulator and driving force of his irenic turn toward Islam."²⁶

4. The Turks before Vienna in 1529: Polemics and self-critique. Three great Christian thinkers, contemporaries of this event, on several occasions voiced their opinion that the Ottoman empire as a great Islamic power was presenting a threat for Christianity in Europe: they were Erasmus of Rotterdam, Luther of Wittenberg and Calvin of Geneva. Their ideas about Islam cannot just be assigned to the bookshelves of history, because their followers, whether they be humanists, Lutherans or Calvinists, still refer to them as authorities, also in their views on Islam.²⁷ Casual remarks made by Luther during his table

²⁵ Text of the letter in J.M. Gaudeul, *Encounters and Clashes: Islam and Christianity in History I*, A survey (Rome: PISAI, 1984), pp. 198, 199.

²⁶ L. Hagemann, *Der Kur'an in Verständnis und Kritik bei Nikolaus von Kues. Ein Beitrag zur Erhellung islamisch-christlicher Geschichte* (Frankfurt: Knecht, 1976), pp. 182, 183.

²⁷ H. Kraemer, *Religion and the Christian Faith* (London: Lutterworth, 1956) claims that the Reformers, despite their defec-

talks became important statements because he had made them.

a. Erasmus

Erasmus (1469-1536), the Christian humanist, referred to Islam in several of his writings. The longest text (80 pages in Latin) he devoted to the subject was his *"Consultatio de Bello Turcis Inferendo"*. In 1530, he had inserted it into his commentary on Psalm 29 *Vox Domini*. Though Erasmus was aware of the medieval doctrine of the Just War and did not want to be counted a pacifist, his *Consultatio* presented a "religious point of view on the problem of war against the Turks". A.G. Weiler of the Catholic University of Nijmegen summarizes this point of view as follows:

The tremendous growth of Turkish power cannot be attributed to their piety or virtue. They owe their victories to the vices of Christians who fought against the Turks while their God was angry with them . . . If the Christians had fought a righteous war with the Turks, in concord and union under the banner of Christ, with pure souls, their Christian territory would not have been so diminished.²⁸

Erasmus insisted on the all-determining moral factor in the Christians' position. God's anger at the vices of the Christians in both church and state should motivate towards *correctio vitae*, the improvement of Christian life.

b. Luther

Whereas Nicholas of Cusa and Erasmus were still in favor of some sort of crusade to stop the Ottoman onslaught, Luther rejects the very idea. He agrees with the view of Erasmus that

tive knowledge, gave basically correct theological interpretations of non-Christian religions (p. 176).

- 28 A.G. Weiler, "The Turkish Argument and Christian Piety in Desiderius Erasmus' 'Consultatio de Bello Turcis Inferendo' (1530)", in *Erasmus of Rotterdam, the Man and Scholar*, Proceedings of the Symposium in 1986, J. Sperna Weiland and W.Th.M. Frijhoff, eds. (Leiden, 1988), pp. 30-39. I owe this reference to Dr C. Augustijn, a specialist on Erasmus.

God uses the Turks to punish the Christians; this, by the grace of God, may result in a new lifestyle, more in accordance with the gospel. But Luther separates the two realms of church and state. A crusade under the banner of the pope can only lead to disaster for church and empire. The duty to defend the citizens' life and property is the prerogative of the emperor and the kings. Luther, though praising the Muslims for their many virtues, ultimately rates Islam as a religion that teaches salvation by works. Luther's eschatological view of history has an apocalyptic temper. The political struggle hides the struggle between Christ and Satan. He sees the devil at work in popery, Turks and Jews. The pope is the anti-Christ in spirit because of his doctrines, but the empire of the Turks is the anti-Christ incarnate. And yet, he recognizes that the Turkish empire has a well-ordered government to which Christian subjects owe obedience. In all of Luther's works, from the *Ninety-Five Theses* to his last book, the Turks are a recurrent theme. Luther and Erasmus were dealing with a public well-informed about political events, because the printing press for the first time enabled the for that time large-scale production of newspapers. That is why all three leading thinkers refer to the Turks in their letters, books, pamphlets, sermons, commentaries, conversations, prayers, etc. But their knowledge of Islam was still very medieval.²⁹ It is difficult to trace their precise sources, because in those days it was not customary to give bibliographical references when one wrote a book! It is to Luther's credit that he addressed a letter to the City Council of Basle to urge them to release Robert Kettons's Latin translation, printed exactly four hundred years after it had been made. Moreover, Luther himself wanted to know the sources in order to use them as an apologetic tool. He thought that the Roman

²⁹ For a survey of all negative views on Islam in the Middle Ages, see Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Edinburgh, 1960); for the modern period, see Albert Hourani, *Islam in European Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 119 pp.

Catholic Church had withheld information about Islam. But what a disappointment! The text, with a refutation by Bibliander, turned out to be worse than he had expected. For this edition of the Qur'an Luther had even written a preface which was never printed. It was rediscovered in 1913.

Luther saw the Turk, the pope and the devil as the three demonic adversaries of God. Gordon Rupp, on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of Luther's birth in 1983 wrote: "In 1529, Western Christendom was shaken to the core by the news that the Turk had conquered Budapest and stood at the gates of Vienna. In that year Luther published two writings: the first against the Turks . . . the second an immensely careful and powerful sermon intended for Christians who might be involved in the war."³⁰ One can understand, therefore, that during the festivities in 1983, the Muslims in Germany requested that the Lutheran churches publicly reject all the negative statements Luther had made about the "Turks" (= Muslims). The churches did not give in to this request. This means that Luther's negative views are not yet a thing of the past.

c. Calvin

"Calvin and the Turks"³¹ was a subject I dealt with during a conference on Christian-Muslim relations held in June 1990 in Hartford; the occasion was the retirement of Dr W.A. Bijlefeld, the editor of the leading Protestant quarterly of Islamic studies, *The Muslim World* (since 1911). The proceedings of the conference are being printed by Texas University Press. I am taking a few thoughts from a chapter I contributed to that book. The Frenchman Calvin (1509-1564) was the youngest of the great

³⁰ Gordon Rupp, "Luther against 'The Turk, the Pope and the Devil'", in *Seven-Headed Luther*, Essays in Commemoration of a Quincentenary 1483-1983, pp. 256-273. I owe this reference to Kenneth Cracknell after I had sent him my "Luther en de wortels van het Islamisme" [Luther and the roots of anti-Islamism] in *Begrip Moslims Christenen* 68 (1984), pp. 2-18.

³¹ J. Slomp, *Calvin and the Turks*. Forthcoming, therefore no direct references are made to Calvin's works in this essay.

Reformers, farther from the arena of war than Luther, and a life-long contemporary of Suleiman the Magnificent. How magnificent could be seen in a very beautiful exhibition shown in Washington (1987) and Paris (1990). It was painful for Calvin that his own king, to whom he had devoted the first edition of his *magnum opus*, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, betrayed the European cause by siding with the Ottoman sultan against Charles V. Calvin takes it badly that the Turkish delegations in France were given more freedom than the evangelical Christians. Calvin, like Luther, measured Islam according to the yardstick of his own central dogmas. Turks, in his view, have only a figment (a fabrication based on the imagination) of God, because "who does not have the Son does not have the Father". An argument still often heard! Throughout his long life, Calvin made many references to the Turks and their religion (Prophet, Qur'an, religious institutions, women, political power, etc.), mainly in his commentaries and sermons. The sources of whatever knowledge he had are not known. But the similarities with the views expressed by Erasmus and Luther, for both of whom he had great admiration, are striking. Both Calvin and Luther reckoned with the possibility that the Turks might conquer Europe. Calvin's general observations about non-Christian religiosity were more positive than the ones he made about Islam. He was still influenced by the medieval slander and strengthened in his negative attitude by the "cold-war" mentality prevalent in his days. Europe in those days was obsessed with fear of the Turks. Calvin, unlike Luther, did nothing to try to save his publisher, Oporin in Basle, from prison and bankruptcy for having printed the Qur'an! Oporin's letter to Calvin, as far as we know, remained unanswered. There is no evidence that Calvin ever read the Qur'an Oporin had printed.

There is no space in this survey to deal with the other Reformers' views on Islam.³²

³² Victor Segesvary, *L'Islam et la Réforme* (Lausanne: L'Age d'homme, 1978), deals with the reformers in Zürich (1510-1550).

5. Colonial times and Enlightenment: Orientalism and literary borrowing. During Vasco da Gama's era, the tables were turned on Islam. Historians date the beginning of the intellectual decline and the stagnation of the Arab world to around 1500. In the Ottoman and Moghul empires the decline set in much later. The colonial conquests, however, were a prelude to the fall of these reigns. Europe had no reason to fear Islam any longer. G.W.F. Hegel (1770-1831), the most influential German Idealist philosopher of his time, wrote that Islam had retreated to Asia and Africa.³³ In his days the Greek *reconquista* of "Istanbul" had started. The need to be polemical or apologetic gradually disappeared from scholarly studies in the areas of what came to be called Orientalism.³⁴ Oriental studies were greatly stimulated by Napoleon's expedition to Egypt (1798), just as Turkey started to seek science and power in the West.

A more objective approach of other cultures and religions, but often with a strong Western bias still, resulted in a great scientific and scholarly output. Several authors sought exposure to Eastern thought and delights. This time it was not a theologian but the poet Goethe who took a fancy to Islam and its culture. The Persian poet Hafiz was his guide when he wrote his *West-östlicher Divan* (1819).³⁵ Some thinkers of the Enlightenment valued Islam, as being a rational, natural, monotheist religion. The days of calumny seemed to be over. A few decades later, Goethe, the German, and Thomas Carlyle, the Scotsman, opened the door for a more positive appreciation of the Prophet of Islam.

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- ³³ Quoted in Claude Liauzu, *L'Islam de l'occident: La Question de l'Islam dans la conscience occidentale* (Paris: Arcantère, 1989), p. 21.
- ³⁴ Cf. the debate in Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978).
- ³⁵ J. Slomp, "The Triangle: Hafiz, Goethe and Iqbal", in Hakim Mohammed Said, *Main Currents of Contemporary Thought in Pakistan* (Karachi: Hamdard, 1973), pp. 388-414, and since then: Katharina Mommsen, *Goethe und die arabische Welt* (Frankfurt: Insel, 1988).

Goethe could write in 1819: "Wenn Islam Gott ergeben heißt, in Islam leben und sterben wir alle." [If Islam means to surrender to God, then we all live and die in Islam.] One of Goethe's friends, Reinhard, upon receiving a copy of the *Divan*, wrote in reply on 1 February 1820 that he had recommended the book to a lady friend with the argument that in the world of the spirits all roads lead to the same goal . . . The other reason why he thought he could recommend Goethe's poem was, "daß man sich einem gläubigen Moslem, wie Sie sind, wohl anvertrauen könne" [that one could well commit oneself to the care of a believing Muslim such as you].³⁶

6. The modern age. With Goethe and Orientalism we have come a long way since Muslims were being treated as *pagani et infideles* (pagans and infidels). The new attitudes could not fail to have an impact on Christian theology vis-à-vis Islam. By the turn of the century, we find a more positive view of Muhammad in the systematic theology of the Reformed theologian Herman Bavinck in Amsterdam, and a rather negative one in the writings of Henri Lammens, a Belgian Jesuit who had followed the hyper-critical school of historical critical research. However, a few decades later, positions were changed when the leading Protestant theologian Karl Barth made rather negative remarks about Islam; at the same time, the Roman Catholic theologians Karl Rahner and Louis Massignon were preparing the way for the positive statements on Muslims in *Nostra Aetate* during the Second Vatican Council, in October 1965. Hendrik Kraemer had pleaded in October 1960 for a radical rethinking of Christian attitudes and activities vis-à-vis Muslims and Islam.³⁷ His call seems to have been realized in the works of Kenneth Cragg and his school, as well as in an ever-increasing number of dialogue programs in Europe.

³⁶ Dr Julia Gauss drew my attention to the quotation from Reinhard, in *Goethe und Reinhard, Briefwechsel in den Jahren 1807 bis 1832* (Frankfurt: Insel, 1957), p. 237.

³⁷ H. Kraemer, *The Muslim World* (October 1960), p. 250.

III. Conclusions

In 1921, the German scholar of Islam C.H. Becker pointed to three major ingredients the Muslims and the Western world have in common: (1) the ancient Orient, including the Persian and Jewish components, (2) Hellenism in the areas of philosophy, science and medicine, (3) Christianity (as far as it contributed to Islam in its formative period, and ever since, as counterpart and/or rival of Islam).³⁸ The above survey of contacts between Islam and Europe seems to confirm his thesis.

An old legend about the origin of "Europe" has it that Europa was the King of Tyre's beautiful and attractive daughter. Zeus, under the guise of a handsome bull, enticed her and absconded with her to Crete. There is another explanation for the name Europe. It is what Asians called the country beyond the sea. At any rate, the origin of the name in both stories has to do with Asia. Would the thesis be too farfetched that Islam, although having originated in Asia (as Judaism and Christianity did!), made considerable contributions to the growth and ever-changing identity of Europe? The above examples, in my opinion, show that European culture and religion were stimulated and enriched by the clashes and encounters which had been occurring with Islam and Muslims within and without its borders. Prof. J.B. Duroselle, whose book *Europe: History of its Inhabitants* was published in 1990 in seven European languages simultaneously, at least does not ignore the Islamic elements that went into the making of Europe. The typology of some of the great thinkers and of some periods of intensive contact with and exposure to Islam which Europe has had throughout the centuries, justifies, in my view, the claim that Islam is not a *corpus alienum* (a foreign element) in Europe. Europe has benefited in the widest possible sense from the Islamic legacy in spite of the fact that Islamic law forbids Christians to inherit from Muslims.

³⁸ C.H. Becker, *Islamstudien: Vom Wesen und Werden der islamischen Welt* (Hildesheim: Olms 1967), 2nd ed., Vol. I, p. 28.

When we teach (church) history in our European schools and universities, we also ought to mention the Islamic dimension of our common past, for the sake of our common future. This conclusion may not only apply to Europe, but also, *mutatis mutandis*, to other parts of the world.

Part IV

Report and Recommendations



Report of the Consultation

1. History, culture and identity

The first issue that surfaced in our discussion was: How are we to deal with the Muslim claim that God is the God of all life. This means that no realm of human concern is outside the purview of religion. In spite of this high claim, which has been articulated over and over again by Muslims, we are all well aware that the way this functions is quite different in different places. This *caveat*, however, does diminish the serious challenge this Muslim claim poses to Christians. In certain Christian circles there has been an attempt to take seriously a similar claim made by some Christians, in the various liberation theologies, for instance, and their attempts to keep religion and politics in a creative tension. But it must be said that we will either have to scrutinize the validity of this Muslim claim in light of our Christian faith or reject it at the cost of bifurcating our mutual claim to faith in God. So this challenge has a certain ambiguity for the Christian community. Thus, we will have to give some serious consideration to the issue of religion and politics on the basis of our Christian faith in the sovereignty of God.

This should further force us to look at the situation of Christians and Muslims in the Asian countries. We must pay special heed to the particular history of each country in question, so that we are able to lay out the genealogy of the problems in each country with accuracy and sympathy. For example in the Philippines, the whole issue of Christian-Muslim relations has a special character. The Philippines are the only country in Asia where the Christian population is in the majority and where the Muslim minority has been struggling for its rights for many years. This history of Christian-Muslim relations in the Philippines has been seriously affected by the Spanish-American colonial history, and there is a deep suspicion on the side of the Muslims against the Christians. In order to overcome this problem, certain members of both

groups are reviewing this history. In doing so, there is a growing realization that both groups are victims of some of the same problems. Both groups are searching for the right of self-determination, and this has created a way of coming together on a few common grounds for the struggle for justice and participatory nation-building.

What we constantly encounter in Christian-Muslim relations is the memory of certain past events which may have happened long ago, but are remembered as if they had taken place only recently. With this kind of memory structure, the genealogical approach to undo some of the suspicion, and the problems posed by Christian-Muslim relations become all the more important and urgent. Christians and Muslims alike forget how badly they have treated each other in history and both present the other as the historical culprit. This tendency creates psychological and historical barriers for developing genuine relations. In order to overcome these barriers, an honest historical re-appraisal, preferably together, is essential. This can create the much needed atmosphere for genuine repentance and forgiveness. But the possibility of this kind of working relations is also affected by the majority/minority situation of Christians and Muslims. In those countries where both are minorities such a task might be relatively easy when concerns are jointly perceived, but where one is majority and the other is minority the task tends to be more difficult and complex.

The manner in which Muslims perceive the relations of religion and politics differs from country to country. One of the major factors influencing this difference is whether the Muslims are a majority or a minority in a given country. Generally, where the Muslims are a minority, they tend to push for a secular state, as is the case in India. Whereas, where the Muslims are in majority, they want to see the legislative and judiciary subservient to the *shari'ah* rule, as is the case in Pakistan. This possibility of interpretive variation and its full appreciation allows the dialogue with Muslims on the issues of religion and politics to be more significant than working with a monolithic assumption.

The recent change that we are witnessing, both in the Christian and the Muslim communities in their attitude towards outside structures, reflects an interesting shift. Earlier, it was the Christians in Asia who had an outside connection with the West (e.g. Europe or North America) and they looked towards this connection with the West as providing the main source for the churches' development in Asia. This attitude has changed considerably, and more and more Christians are fighting for their indigenous identity and right for self-determination. The picture is quite reversed for the Muslims in recent times. After seeing themselves for centuries as being part of the local indigenous reality, Asian Muslims have recently begun to see the main source of their identity located outside, in the "West" (eg. Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey) also. For both, Christians and Muslims, the financial aspect has played a major role. In spite of the fact that the Asian churches are still largely dependent on Western sources for their survival, their struggle for independence and self-determination gives them certain insights for the indigenization process which is crucial for their identity today. But the shift taking place among the Muslims makes it harder and harder for Christian-Muslim relations to develop in a proper way; however, it does provide Christians with an opportunity to share some of their indigenization concerns.

This new change in Islam in Asia has a different character than the earlier movements such as Pan-Islamism (and even Pan-Arabism). So while there is a growing development in the Islamic consciousness, it has not acquired the more accessible symbol of Pan-Islamism which may provide some clues to the other aspect of the identity question, perhaps still lying below the surface in the new quest for an overall Islamic identity. One of the central characteristics of this new Islamic consciousness is the contrasting quality it reflects vis-a-vis the West, whereas the ecumenical movement in Christianity, which now has quite a long history, has begun to develop its identity not as being "over against others" but in the context of relations with other members of the

body and even with other faiths. With the Islamic identity still being posed in the "over against others" manner, we need to stretch out our hand to Muslims as they struggle to redefine their identity.

In our own earlier ecumenical movement, there was an emphasis on shared unity or communality which was introduced from the West. In due course this emphasis prepared the way for a re-discovery of our plurality with the goal of achieving a shared unity. In the most recent phase of the ecumenical movement the concern is for maintaining a shared identity without negating diversity or pluriformity within ecumenical relations. Thus we have begun to explore seriously the relationship between gospel and culture, and have become more open to diverse cultural perceptions of Christ. This shifting emphasis gives us an insight we should be able to share with Muslims in such a way that they continue to maintain creative relations with us while maintaining their religio-cultural identity and difference.

On the surface, it seems that we are in principle committed to the development of indigenous theology, but in practice this has not always been the case, and we have been thoroughly dependent on outside sources. On the other hand, it seems that the Muslims in principle have no such commitment to an indigenous theology, given the centrality of *ummah* in their theology, but in practice they have been able to achieve more substantial cultural adaptation or assimilation. This is how the situation has been explained generally on the basis of appearance, but when one digs a little deeper, on the bases of the attitude towards revelation and sacred text, one gets a different picture. The Islamic notion of revelation and sacred text has an acceptance of plurality built into it as a central doctrine with the notion of *Ahl-al-Kitab*. This concept of *Ahl-al-Kitab* was expanded beyond the Torah, *zabur* and *ingil* to include the sacred texts of the Zoroastrians in Iran, and later was even used by some scholars for Hindu texts in India. This plurality, however, does not mean that the Muslims accept these sacred texts and the revelation of the non-Muslims as maintained and professed by the latter; these texts must

always go through the filter of the Qur'an and Islamic understanding. In spite of this caution, the simple fact that the plurality of sacred texts is accepted gives Islam a theoretical as well as a practical possibility of cultural and social assimilation; this has been variously expressed by such terms as *urf* and *adaat* which allow the acceptance of another source of law in many areas of life. In Christianity, the exclusive claim to sacred text does not always give the best possibility of indigenization, but by not having a fixed code or legal system, like the Islamic *shari'ah*, the Christians have a possibility of adaptation which is quite fertile.

On all the above grounds there is an unique quality about Islam and Christian-Muslim relations in Asia. Unlike its manifestation in the Arab context, and in Africa and Europe, the matrix here has a multi-religious context which demands that any consideration on both these aspects must heed the other religious communities present who also act as partners in this dialogue.

2. Contemporary perceptions

In our discussions on contemporary perceptions in Christian-Muslim relations, we were conscious of the problem that the use of labels such as "fundamentalism" or "liberalism" is hardly conducive to dialogue and understanding. Even if such terms are intended to be descriptive, they are often loaded with evaluative sentiment and thus seldom accepted by those labelled.

Within the Christian family, we use terms like "liberal" or "fundamentalist" in order to denounce theologies that we do not understand or with which we disagree. Even worse, we do not stop at criticizing ideas, but all too often extend our condemnation to the persons who embrace them. True communication is impeded by such over-simplified labelling with which we define other people without allowing them to define themselves.

The problem becomes even more complex when we meet people of other faiths, e.g. Muslims. True, within the Muslim world there exist labels such as *salafiyya*, *mu'tazila* and *usuliyya* to denote different—even conflicting—lines of theological thinking.

But for a non-Muslim to adopt these labels, or to introduce new labels from the outside, is not fruitful, especially not in situations of human encounter.

The term "fundamentalist" (Arabic *usuliyya*), for instance, has as many connotations and interpretations in Islam as in Christianity. It can be used with self-assurance: "We believe in the Qur'an and the *sunnah* of the Prophet as the sole sources of theology"; it can be used by others in a derogatory way: "Those fundamentalists claim they alone possess the whole truth; they seem to say: we have it all—take it or leave it."

Historically speaking, we may say that among Muslims in Asia, there have been "fundamentalist" movements (in the former sense of strict adherence to the Qur'an and *sunnah*) ever since the *Naqshibandi* reaction to Adbar's *Din-i-Ilahi*.

Non-Muslim observers have used terms such as "resurgent Islam" or "militant Islam" to describe political upheavals in the Muslim world. One has to be careful with such usage; if political activism among Muslims is related by analysts to one particular form of Islamic thought, namely "fundamentalism" (or "Khomeinism" or "the Muslim Brotherhood"), then misunderstandings are bound to occur. In fact, very few currents of Islamic thought have encouraged believers to stay away from politics; on the contrary, as we noted earlier, political life is generally regarded as an integral part of Islam.

Among Christians in Asia, the story again is different. Some missionaries from Europe brought with them an attitude to Christian life often labelled "pietism". Out of this heritage, we may say, a form of "fundamentalism" emerged in Asia, which tended to encourage a withdrawal from active involvement in politics and promoted an otherworldly spirituality.

The most important lesson to be drawn from the history of mutual labelling (often equivalent to mutual denouncement) is that no dialogue will bear fruit, if we do not allow each other to define ourselves.

3. Relations in Asia

a. Demographic factors. In exploring Christian relations with Muslim neighbors in the Asian context, we need to be aware of the demographic situation in each country, particularly the majority/minority status of the respective community. The majority/minority dichotomies may not be applicable everywhere in Asian. In Indonesia, because of the ideology of Pancasila, reputedly there is no such thing as minority or majority. All are equal in the eyes of the state. In other countries, however, like Malaysia and Pakistan, Christians are made to feel they are in the minority. Examples of the difficulties faced by Christian minorities living in the Philippine city of Marawi and some parts of West Malaysia could be illustrative. In Marawi, Christians are reportedly harassed, kidnapped and even killed by Moro (i.e., Muslim Filipino) terrorists. In some parts of West Malaysia, Chinese and Indian Christians have allegedly been subjected to religious pressures and often been harassed. When discussing Christian-Muslim relations with a view to improving them, the general consensus was that we should place our conversation in its proper perspective and avoid pronouncing quick and easy judgments. For example, we would avoid loosely using the words "good" and "bad" when referring to a person or group of persons, as this could be taken to mean the entire ethnic or religious group. Also, we would need to define issues so that we could have a focus for our dialogues with Muslims or peoples of other faiths.

We have recognized the helpful appeal of the present prime minister of Bangladesh when she recently addressed the citizens of her country: "Let us come to build the country." This appeal has emphasized one important issue common to all Asians, namely, the need for a meaningful community development that will benefit all. Examples from various Asian countries were cited where the coming together of Muslims and Christians for finding solutions to common problems had resulted in cooperation, and in the process, had improved relationships. These experiences underscore the need for Christians and Muslims alike (and for

members of other religious groups as well) to show solidarity with each other when facing a common future, and when helping to build their nation. In our discussions, also the historical dimension was emphasized, especially as in many Asian situations the community that has benefited most from the colonial domination in the past is the Christian. In the context of the search for cultural and national identity, what should Christians say to that situation? As citizens of independent Asian countries, Christians should not remain mentally captive to the past, but rather should learn the lessons of history and project a new vision for the future. There is a need, in other words, to minimize the negative elements of the past and to accentuate the positive that may be useful for building the future.

The urgent need today is to become free of our dependence on the past—culturally and psychologically. We must overcome our personal prejudices against Muslims.

b. Cooperation and dialogue. We strongly recognized the need to cooperate with Muslims in the struggle against colonialism or forms of neocolonialism, economic oppression, and to work for reconciliation and peace. However, we felt that ideological issues, such as capitalism, communism, etc., that have often preoccupied many Christians and Muslims (so that they missed dealing with important issues relating to the betterment of Christian-Muslim relations) should not be ignored. We are, however, aware that religion can be used, and in fact, has been used as an ideology. To a certain degree, religion has often become a political tool. A few political leaders have used religion to support political policies, not necessarily for the good of the nation, but more for narrow, personal or vested interests.

Dialogue should therefore bear on economic problems, social justice, and community building/formation. We, as Christians, should be conscious of our own identity in relation to our religious neighbors. To study Islam is advisable and necessary for

understanding Muslims; but we must also strengthen our Christian faith and character as we converse with peoples of other faiths. Insecurity about one's own basis of faith often leads to fear, aggressiveness and fanaticism.

We also need to listen to those who do not agree or co-operate with us. A process of education that promotes mutual understanding should be initiated. We must help Muslims to understand us better, let them know our motives, our central affirmations. As Christians we cannot omit our witness, both as persons and as participants in the community, but it is important that we Christians seek to embody the gospel in the midst of Muslim neighbors.

Concerning the suggestion that the use of retribution or retaliation may, at times, be necessary, the participants of this meeting were unanimous in saying "No" to this option. As there is some truth to the claim that present antipathy of Muslims to Christians has its basis in historical and economic factors, it is necessary to accept this historical dimension of economic exploitation. The present problems of many Asian countries are directly related to the colonial past. Christian-Muslim dialogue therefore must concentrate on building mutual trust and a commitment to a common future.

c. Reconciliation and peace. We recognize that reconciliation and peace between Christians and Muslims are already a fact on many personal and local, community levels. The role of Christians in bringing about peace in situations of conflict, even between representatives of religious communities other than the Christian (for instance, during the communal riots between Hindus and Muslims in India) is noteworthy. It is, however, lamentable to point out that it is relatively easy to be in good and close relationship with a Muslim neighbor on the personal level. But when the group identity is concerned, especially when there are larger issues involved, this improved personal relationship is often sidetracked.

It is helpful that Christians make use of every opportunity to develop closer relations between these two religious groups. We recognize, however, that there is a difficulty in Malaysia, for instance, where the Bumiputra issue is a sensitive one and tends to isolate Malays from other ethnic groups.

With regard to religio-ethnic exclusivism, it is necessary to explore new avenues in overcoming negative relations. Christians should contact committed Muslim intellectuals, groups and communities as partners for change, and to foster better relations.

d. Human rights and obligations. Human rights and obligations have a universal dimension. Christians and Muslims should recognize that and work together for their enforcement. This means that stronger groups should not try to impose their understanding of right and justice on weaker groups. Christians could learn a lesson from the experience of plurality in Indonesia which is a major part of the social consciousness, especially as expressed in the national effort to build the country together. However, Asian Christians should continue to be concerned with the conditions of the poor and with the social, historical and economic factors that make them remain poor and exploited. Thus, Christians should not be content with analyzing poverty from a merely sociological point of view, treating it as a structural problem only, and tending to ignore the real suffering of human beings.

We should stress the following as burning issues on human rights and obligations: First, we recognize the need to emphasize the responsibility of governments to safeguard or guarantee proper living conditions for all citizens of the Asian countries, especially the poor, oppressed and exploited. Secondly, we also see the need to underscore legal equality for all, especially where Muslims are dominant in a given country. Christians and Muslims alike should strive to ensure legal protection for all ethnic and religious minorities. The imposition of *shari'ah* in Pakistan, for instance, has provoked certain fears among Christians in that country, while the implications of this decision

for the future are not at all clear. Christian attitudes toward the State, particularly when it is religiously oriented, need to be carefully reviewed. Christians should see it as a challenge constantly to reassess their roles in society. Thus, among others, programs of political education should evolve, that could help them develop a more responsible stance towards the State.

e. Community development and community organizing.

Community development, together with community organizing, is an effective project engaged in by Christians in many Asian countries. In Bangladesh, Indonesia and the Philippines, for example, people have worked together for the improvement of Christian-Muslim relations by joining hands to solve common social and economic problems in the communities where they live. In the process, they have realized some successes in the protection of workers' rights and the rights of others.

We believe that the stronger communities should become more sensitive to the aspirations of the weaker communities, and help them to give expression to their aspirations.

Examples from Asian countries are varied: in Bangladesh, there are successful cooperative projects, family planning, self-help development projects and agricultural projects. In Indonesia, people motivate and encourage each other as they demand their own rights. In the process, they have become closer to each other, without any reference to religion being made. Economic and political issues dominate relations in the struggle towards a common future. In the Philippines, community development for all—in urban as well as in rural areas—have given some hope to the poor and exploited.

In East Malaysia, it is possible to do community work among the poor, because there are fewer Muslims than Christians and people of other religious groups. However, in West Malaysia, community development projects are a problem because of the sensitivity of the *Bumiputra* issue. The Malaysian Government is

wary of the motives and effects of community development projects and raises the question whether these are not a means to convert Malays. The issue for the churches in Asia is: What is the Christian role in community development as a legitimate response to human needs in Malaysia and in other countries?

f. The role of women in Christian-Muslim relations. Women have a vital role to play in Asian societies and a special position in traditional Asia. Socio-cultural changes through the years, however, have made their position and role a matter of concern for Christians. Current Islamic law in effect in some Asian countries and the pressures of the community that are made to bear on Asian women—especially as these laws also affect Christian women who have married Muslims—greatly preoccupies Christians, as this generally restricts the rights of women in Asia. However, the fact that both Christian and Muslim women in Asia are now beginning to assert their rights gives cause for hope. They should be encouraged in this, as all women are facing the same problems. Opportunities for women to work for the betterment of Christian-Muslim relations should be provided.

Both Christians and Muslims are to be urged to reassess the roles they traditionally assign to women in their communities. To some extent this process has already begun and must be vigorously pursued. The fact that both in Pakistan and Bangladesh women have been elected to the office of prime minister is a significant testimony to the transformations already occurring in some predominantly Muslim countries.

In highlighting the issue of women's rights, we recognize that insufficient attention has so far been paid to the role that women may play in strengthening Christian-Muslim relations. This is a theme that requires further attention in the future.

4. Priority concerns

In our discussions, repeatedly reference was made to the relationship between religion and ideology. Contemporary Islam in some parts of Asia is increasingly becoming a State ideology; this has

become a major concern for Christians. When religion is made into a political ideology, the community will suffer, whether the ideology be Islamic or Christian. In such cases, religion may either become a cementing or a dividing factor (e.g., Malaysia, southern Thailand, Mindanao). In this regard, the implications for the rest of Asia of the recent imposition of the *shari'ah* in Pakistan will be worth studying. Where Christians are a demographic minority in a predominantly Muslim country, considerable fears are aroused among Christians, especially as they are often treated as second-class citizens (*dhimmi*). The same fears are prevalent when State policies promote forced integration of minority religious communities into the main stream. Such attempts at integration have been perceived as a threat to the cultural and religious identity of people (e.g., Muslims in Thailand and in the Philippines).

It is therefore imperative that priority be given to closer interaction between Muslim and Christian communities. In Asia, both communities generally tend to be exclusive or are entirely closed to each other. With a few exceptions, social interaction between the two communities is limited or difficult, even in situations where both are minority communities within a nation. We feel that Christians should take the initiative in breaking down existing barriers between the two communities, for example by joining Muslims in their observance of fast and in celebrating feasts. Christians and churches should seek to cooperate with Muslims in common endeavors to solve local, concrete problems. In situations where there are religious tensions (e.g. between Muslims and Hindus), Christians are to play an active role in bringing about reconciliation and peace.

All this points to the necessity of raising Christian awareness of Muslim concerns. It is important therefore that efforts to initiate dialogue and programs (religious as well as political) involving both communities, the Christian and the Muslim, should be encouraged.

Recommendations

General recommendation

We urge the Asian churches, the Christian study centres on Islam, and the larger Christian communities to develop an understanding of "pro-existence" (in contrast to a mere co-existence) as a manifestation of their Christian faith to create a situation of mutual trust and welfare.

Recommendations to the study centres

We specially commend the activities of the following institutions in Asia:

- Christian Study Centre, in Rawalpindi, Pakistan;
- The Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies, in Hyderabad, India;
- Immanuel Student Centre, Indonesia;
- Peter Gowing Memorial Institute, Philippines.

We recommend that they

- 1.1 prepare literature (handbooks, as far as possible with Muslim co-operation) for the use of the churches and the Muslim community in order to correct mutual misunderstandings;
- 1.2 see it their task to reinterpret the scriptures in the light of our contemporary pluralistic situation and develop contextual theologies;
- 1.3 share their resources and personnel (south-south co-operation) wherever needed.

Recommendations to the churches in Asia

- 2.1 We urge the Asian churches to take full cognizance of the existence of the large number of Muslims in their midst.
- 2.2 Particularly, we urge our church leaders to give priority and importance to establishing good relationships between Muslims and Christians in the interests of both communities.
- 2.3 We recommend that theological schools and institutions adapt their curricula so as to meet needs of their religiously plural countries. We encourage that courses in Islamic history, theology and culture become an essential requirement for graduation.
- 2.4 We recommend that possibilities of south-south co-operation in the Asian setting—student/faculty exchange in the area of Islamic studies—be sought.

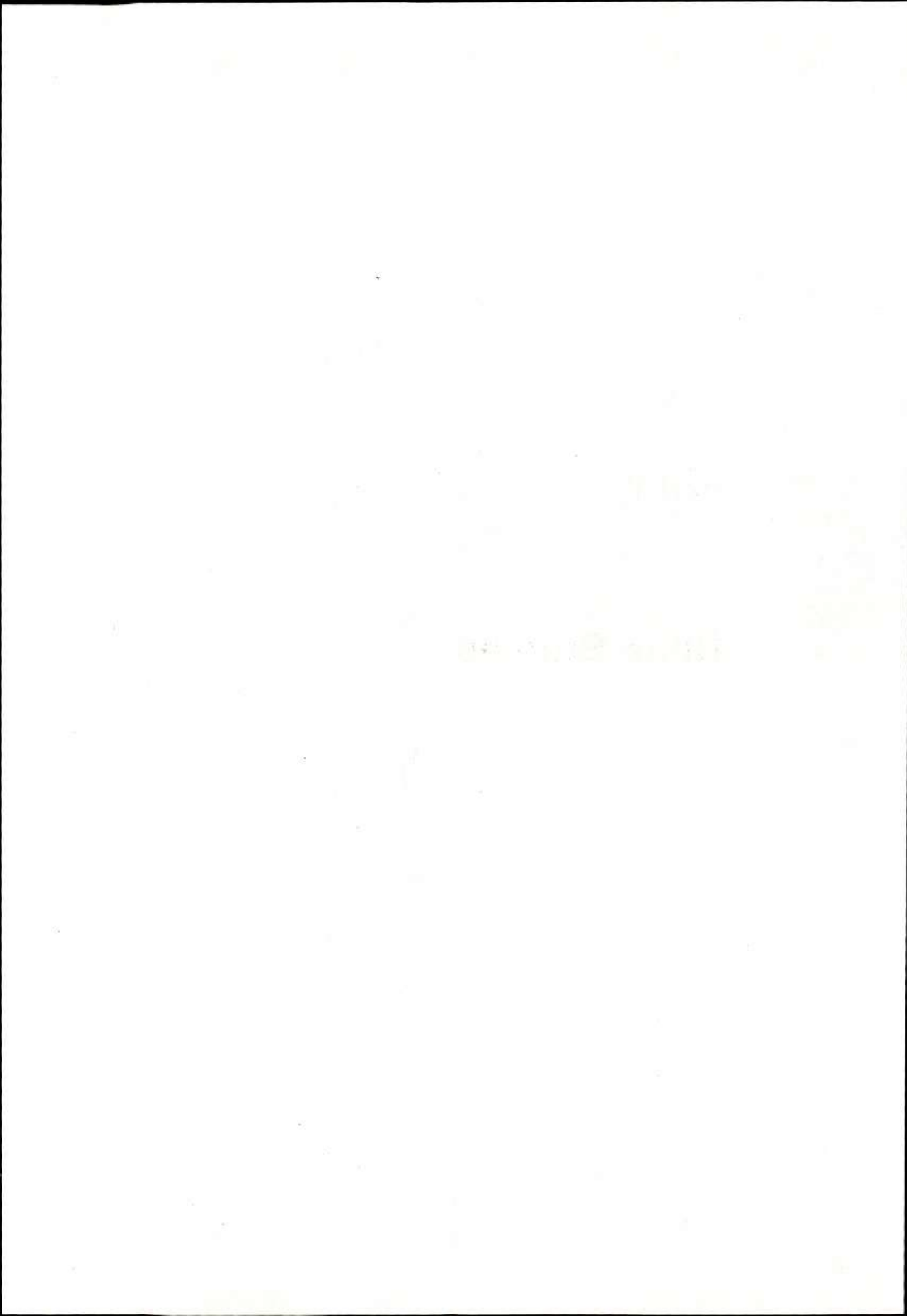
Recommendations to churches at large

- 3.1 To learn from the lessons of the past and to express a clearer solidarity with neighbors of other faiths.
- 3.2 To try to develop a deeper concern for social ethics; to work together with members of other religious communities.
- 3.3 To cultivate a sense of love and concern for Muslim neighbors, to follow the power of love rather than to seek the love of power, when they, as Christians, are facing difficulties.
- 3.4 To encourage a more positive and true knowledge of Islam in order to remove apathy or antipathy and to build a relationship based on friendship; to pay attention to the needs of Muslims and not to ignore their problems, to realize that aggression is often a reaction to neglect and deprivation.

- 3.5 To view human rights and obligations as a universal concern and therefore to work together with adherents of other faiths for their implementation, especially the concern of the world community for the faithful adherence to the United Nations' Declaration of Human Rights. Christian churches in the West are urged to extend their hospitality to Muslim migrants and refugees.
- 3.6 To be or to become pioneers in their societies in treating women as equals and granting them the same opportunities and responsibilities in the church as to men.
- 3.7 To recognize the importance of Islamic study centres and to support them financially.
- 3.8 To evaluate their own educational programs, and to include education that fosters political consciousness and transformation.
- 3.9 To be attentive to the mass media's projection of Islam; to try to challenge and/or correct any prejudiced attitude towards Islam.
- 3.10 To enter into dialogue with conservative Christians and groups who target the Muslim community as a community for proselytism and conversion, and who often bypass the local churches.
- 3.11 In societies where Muslim communities are growing new religious communities, to be sensitive to their religious, social and cultural needs, specially in the Christian institutions.

Part V

Bible Studies



Bible Studies

Genesis 15:1-6

For our opening worship we were invited to become Abraham's travelling companions, fellows on his journey through life; he was guided by his faith and trust in the God who had called him away from his home, away from his family and friends, into a land of which he knew nothing, where he possessed nothing and where he was a total stranger.

This journey in faith and trust became such a decisive event that later generations of believers, first the Jews, then the Christians and finally also the Muslims, saw and revered in him the father of faith, the father of the faithful. I think it is therefore justified that we join Abraham for the time of our second morning devotion also. We shall join him on his journey and try once more to understand the meaning of his journey, the power and the truth that accompanied him and invite us to become and remain his travelling companions.

On the opening day, we were invited to reflect on Genesis 12:1-3. Let us listen today to another part of the Bible's testimony about this outstanding person:

After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, "Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." But Abram said, "O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "You have given me no offspring and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir." But the word of the Lord came to him, "This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir." He brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and count the stars, if

you are able to count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your descendants be." And he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness. (Gen. 15:1-6.)

This passage depicts a human being such as we are. Abraham is a person full of questions, full of troubled thoughts about his future and the future of everyone and everything entrusted to him.

This is one of the very first impressions we conceive and we should keep it in our minds. Abraham is not a hero, he is no superman beyond temptation and fear, he is not even somebody whose faith in God no longer gives room to questions or doubts about the trustworthiness of the God into whose hands he has committed his fate. The Old Testament repeatedly states that there was nothing extraordinary about Abraham's personality when God called him away from his home.

Abraham was an ordinary member of society. Maybe that is one of the reasons why, through all the ages, the faithful have been able to take refuge with him and find strength in his example because they remembered how he journeyed with God; it was a path ordinary people could follow. It has been stressed here that the biblical account of Abraham is not only concerned with him as an individual. God's concern for Abraham reflects his concern for all his creatures: first of all for the people who descend from Abraham and then for the others, until they all become one family again. And all may follow on his journey.

In the text that was read on our first day, Abraham's trust in God is rewarded with a promise: that because of his faith and in his faith all generations on earth will partake in this blessing.

What does this mean? What is the blessing promised to Abraham? We know that in Old Testament thinking, the spiritual and material spheres in which we live and of which we are a part are not divided. Thus, the meaning of blessing is not only something spiritual but also includes material welfare. It sees all

aspects of life as an integrity, and this integrity is guaranteed by God's blessing. The blessing promised to Abraham was of this kind as well: a great people growing out of his offspring, and great wealth. Both were to guarantee that his name be not forgotten and his descendants be protected from being extinguished by enemies or through disasters.

But what were the facts Abraham experienced in his life? What were the proofs he himself witnessed that these promises were to be fulfilled?

He was a Bedouin, and remained one. This means that his wealth in animals and household was considerable, but that he did not have the smallest piece of land on which to keep them safely. He had no heir who would inherit them. He had no shelter. He lived in the continuous danger that all he possessed might be taken from him by enemies or even by friends. It is recorded that not even his wife Sarah was safe. We know that until his death his situation did not change much. The place where his dead body could be laid to rest had to be bought first. Of his descendants, who were numerous as the stars in the sky and the grains of sand on the shore, he only saw two, and one of them he had to dismiss—although the rejected son and the acknowledged son buried their father together.

Was thus God's promised blessing a mere dream, something that remained in the skies? Or should we correct our understanding of "blessing" (*berakha*) and see it as something merely spiritual, something without a material aspect?

The answer of the faithful has obviously been no!

Abraham lived a comfortable and blessed life although he was not to see the fulfilment of the promise. This made him free, free to listen to God every day anew, free to listen to what God told him and to do what was expected of him. Being bound to property and a big family would have deprived Abraham of this openness. He would have had to settle down to safeguard his possessions.

This would have meant that his journey with God came to an end. And this end would not have been his reunion with God but rather a stop in the middle of the way. The care for his household would have demanded much of his attention and would have partly distracted him away from God.

Abraham was saved from this stagnation. He retained his freedom to move whenever God called him. This being on the move remained a decisive factor also for later generations when they reflected on the meaning of faith. Faith is dynamic. It is always on the move and always approaching God and turning its back on all that leads away from God or keeps its distance from him. And sometimes God tested Abraham in very frightening ways, for instance, when he wanted to know whether his son or his God was closer to his heart.

In every situation Abraham had to be open and adapt himself to God's will. Later generations adopted this understanding of faith. Whenever new situations arose where faith had to be witnessed and maintained, Abraham came to the fore. He became people's guide, the great example in whose steps they had to follow. This means that the traditions surrounding Abraham were not static but moved together with the faithful through their history.

Let us look more closely at one example from the Abraham narratives in the book of Genesis. In Chapter 17 it is reported that Abraham introduced circumcision for all men in his household. The textual source where this narrative is recorded is "P", the part of the Pentateuch which originated during the Babylonian exile. In contrast to other Semitic peoples, the Babylonians did not practise circumcision. As a matter of fact, they forbade the exiled Jews to maintain it. In the land of Palestine, circumcision was quite customary, something the Israelites shared with the Canaanites and their other neighbors. It became a matter of distinction in Babylon and, as it was forbidden, marked a *status confessionis*. In this situation refuge was taken with Abraham who is reported to have introduced this custom to his household

after leaving Mesopotamia. This story implies that those wanting to be true descendants of this ancestor of theirs must follow his religious example and advice.

In early Jewish literature many other narratives are recorded in which Abraham is described as being the hero of true faith against all kinds of disbelief or superstition. And this habit of turning to Abraham in situations that are decisive for the actual understanding of God's work is also continued in the New Testament. There again Abraham's faith is a great example for those who are willing to journey with God on the new path he has opened for the faithful. This willingness to move distinguishes the true descendants of Abraham, the faithful, from those for whom Abraham is only the "father in the flesh" and who are comfortably settled in their laws and traditions. John the Baptist, the Apostle Paul and other great Christian thinkers of Jewish descent struggled with the actual meaning of faith and its consequences for the believers after God had acted again through the event of Jesus Christ. Abraham's faith means to keep returning to God (*teshuwa*, or *tauba* in Arabic, which is not a mere mental *metanoia*, as in Greek) who moves the faithful by the dynamics of his spirit.

And in Islam, too, Abraham (Ibrahim) is the great example who calls men and women to move, to leave home, family and property and to follow the path opened by God. Already in times before his calling, Muhammad was moved by the image of Abraham when he first tried to meet God by meditating on the phenomenon of nature or creation as the great signs of the Creator. Then he learned how Abraham had fought against the superstitions of his family, including that of his own father which made them become enemies. This enmity led to an exodus. Just as Abraham had to leave his kin, Muhammad became ever more separated from his clan. But again, this exodus finally led to a new family, the *ummah* of the faithful.

In the Qur'an, Abraham is called a *hanif* and *muslim*; and surely he was that in the original understanding of these words: a *hanif*, who longs and searches for God, and a *muslim* (written with

lower-case "m"), someone who surrenders to God and renounces all positions of honor or glory before his Lord. On another occasion, of utmost importance to the Islamic community, Abraham became the great predecessor and guide: When he freed the "House of God", the Ka'ba in Mecca, from polytheism, and indicated the ways and rites to be followed when the believers of Islam pay homage to God and show their respect to Abraham by following his ways during the great pilgrimage.

Thus, at the end of our reflections we may ask: What are, besides the phenomenon of a "faith on the move", the contents of Abraham's faith? The Qur'an states that Abraham was neither Jew nor Christian, meaning that he did not confess the Jewish or Christian creed nor follow the religious laws and habits of either, as Muhammad knew them. In this point the Qur'an is surely right. In the technical meaning of following the laws and customs of the Islamic *ummah*, Abraham was not a Muslim either (with a capital "M"). Thus he was neither Jew nor Christian nor Muslim. Why not?

Because we know the faith of Abraham only through his attitude: his openness and readiness to move whenever God called him into a new situation. He did not settle down on safe land nor did he settle for dogmas or religious laws which would guarantee a safe life.

This is exactly Abraham's "justice" that our text is talking about: his righteous attitude towards the one who approaches him and the willingness to be led to the place where God wants him to go. He had to stop in many places which were not the goal of his journey. Instead of feeling comfortable—or at least before enjoying a rest—he built an altar and worshipped his God.

Leviticus 19:18, 33-34

You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord. (Lev. 19:18.)

When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you

shall be to you as the citizen among you; and you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God. (Lev. 19:33-34.)

Leviticus is one of those books we usually omit in our regular reading of the Bible. And when a person newly interested in the Christian faith and religion is encouraged to read the Bible and starts at its beginning, it is this book s/he desperately closes and says: How terrible! What kind of religion is this!?

But as sometimes happens in life, the most precious gems are found in the most desolate places. This saying may also be applied to the book of Leviticus. Among the most boring and sometimes annoying passages we suddenly come upon remarks that are most valuable and most precious for our religious life and understanding.

Among those gems are the verses we have read; they appear again in the New Testament as the climax of Christian ethics.

But as is usual with precious things, we face a lot of problems when we meditate on them. The first problem is related to understanding what is meant by the terms "alien" and "neighbor".

At first glance they seem to mean two completely different kinds of persons. In verse 18, the "neighbor" is the *ra'*. That may mean a member of the extended family or clan. Anyway, it means someone not too far away from someone who lives him/herself in the vicinity of one's own home. If that is the case, then, we should ask, Why is there a necessity for this command? Is it not most natural to have good relations with such a neighbor?

But it is obviously necessary, because close blood ties are not enough to guarantee a good and harmonious relationship. And we know from our own experience or from experiences in history that enmity or hatred between brothers and sisters or relatives can be very deep and have the most disastrous consequences.

The first murder committed in the history of humankind, according to Genesis, is the death of a man at the hands of his brother. That is of course not merely a historical question. It is of high typological and symbolic importance and urges us to refrain from being romantic about family or blood relationships.

Let us dwell on this question for a moment. We have read in the New Testament, especially in the Gospels of Luke and John, that at crucial instances the Samaritans appear to be those who are closer to fulfilling God's will or who are more sincere than the Jews in their search for the truth. The Samaritans are the closest ethnic and religious relatives of the people of the Old Covenant, but at the same time they are the most despised, being considered unclean. Thus, being the closest relatives includes being the most rejected ones. I sometimes feel that our relationship to the Muslims runs along similar lines. Next to the Jews, the Muslims are the Christians' closest relatives. But our relations with them are much more strained than those with adherents of other faiths. Why is that so?

The commandment to love one's neighbor is complemented some verses later by the commandment to love the alien and to deal with him/her according to the same standards of law and justice applied to one's own people. This is quite extraordinary! It is indeed so extraordinary that most of the exegetes and interpreters of this passage conclude: Never in the history of ancient Israel has this commandment been implemented. We leave open the question of how modern Israel is dealing with it (or how the church and the *umma* have dealt with it).

May the implementation of this commandment be as it is, the verses are there in the book of Leviticus and they summarize the laws of daily life. The least that can be said of them is that they are a challenge, a very sincere challenge, urging the believers to think about the truth and sincerity of their lives. The foreigners mentioned were obviously people who settled for a shorter or a longer period amidst the people of God. Because of their foreign practices and customs, but also because of their foreign religion,

they must have seemed suspect and often have caused tensions; they probably aroused in other the temptation sometimes to follow their ways of life and faith. Thus, their presence was an element of unrest and insecurity which could easily lead to conflicts. The alien was (and is) a potential enemy. And yet, strangers are not only to be given the same rights and treatment as one's own people, but, like the (unbeloved) neighbor, they must be included in the sphere of love and compassion which usually is restricted to the familiar circle around oneself.

Maybe now we should ask, What is the deeper similarity between neighbors and aliens? Why do both commandments concerned with their treatment state the same: You shall love them like yourself?

Looking at the vocabulary used here may help our understanding. The Hebrew word for "alien" is *ger*. This word has the same etymology as the Arabic word *jar*. But in Arabic, *jar* is the neighbor, not the stranger, as in Hebrew. We find a similar etymological relationship in European languages between a good and a bad neighbor. The *hostis* in Latin has the same etymology as the Germanic *guest* or *Gast*, and in English *host* and *hostile* are used side by side.

May we therefore conclude that the "alien" and the "neighbor" actually are people who are not so far away from each other, their common characteristic being that they are different from us? To demonstrate this may indeed be the final purpose of our text. The attitude towards the neighbor and alien is not only a question of communal behavior, it is also one of personal behavior and attitude. And that is probably the reason why love comes in here.

We should not take it lightly when in both verses quoted it is stated: You shall love them as you love yourself. To love oneself is usually considered to be a very ambiguous matter. Some regard it as the culmination of egotism and self-centeredness. For others it becomes a problem, because their attitude towards themselves is ambiguous, sometimes even unhealthy. They cannot

accept themselves as they are, some even hate themselves. Hence, to love oneself is causing some people serious and complex problems. It is not possible to go into detail here. Suffice it to say that the first step towards a healthy relationship with others is to safeguard a healthy and affectionate attitude towards oneself. Only persons at peace with and loving themselves can give peace and love to others.

This peace and love must of course not remain secluded in one's own heart. Peace and love mean relations, they need a partner. This is why God, whose essence is love, created humankind, in order to find such a partner. This is why humankind, a community made up of individuals, must be bound together once again by this bond of peace and love; a beginning must be made at the individual level by settling the relationship with those who seem to be the most difficult partners: neighbors and strangers. Thus, when the Gospel of Matthew (5:43, 44) quotes verse 18 from our text and includes the dimension of the enemy, the quotation is actually not a literal one, but it reflects its intention and consequences. When Jesus according to Matthew says, Love your enemies, he exactly interprets and sharpens the meaning which is implied so ambiguously in the term of *ger*.

We should now ask, who these hostile neighbors and neighborly aliens are? Maybe we remember that this was what the scribe asked Jesus: "Tell me who is my neighbor whom I shall love?" (Luke 10:29.)

Before coming back to this episode, let us first have a look at Jesus' life. Who were the people in his neighborhood with whom he had dealings, whom did he love, whom did he talk to and live with?

The first group mentioned by him when he started preaching about the realities of the kingdom of heaven are the physically weak and disabled: the blind, the deaf, the lame; soon the poor were also added. All of them were people obviously without moral defects, but who nevertheless lived on the fringes of society and did not participate in life fully. But then there were also those

who had leprosy and other diseases and who, being considered unclean, were excluded from the communal life. The same was true for those who led a morally questionable life: girls and women selling their bodies, corrupt customs officials and others who were despised by society. Even pagans entered Jesus' life circle and although he at first wanted to reject them, he came to accept them also.

But what was the meaning of all this? In meeting them, healing them and accepting them as human beings, he restored their human dignity and integrity and thus opened the door for them to return to a life in community and communion with their fellows. In this communion they could once again live a life in the fullness of its meaning, in good relations with their fellows and with the God whom they worshipped together.

These are some indications as to who the neighbors might be. But once again let us remember the scribe's question. Let us also realize that Jesus did not answer it. What the scribe had asked for was obviously a catalogue of criteria, of special marks which would show who was a neighbor. Having this catalogue at his service he would then be able to decide easily who fell within this category and who did not. Such a catalogue was obviously what the Pharisee and the Levite had in mind when they passed the wounded victim of robbers without giving care to him. But the Samaritan did not have such a catalogue and that is precisely why he did help. This was Jesus' answer: Do not try to determine who your neighbor is. What matters is this: To whom do you become the neighbor?

Philippians 2:1-11

In the last two Bible studies, we first joined Abraham on his journey in faith under the guidance of the God who led him out of his home, out of his country, who sent him to sojourn as a free person in this world which is God's property. He was an alien and became a neighbor to many people. God, in whom he trusted and who was with him, became his life's orientation. In the human community he became a neighbor to many, but finally

he remained an alien. And then we reflected on the commandment which Jesus himself called the highest one beside the love of God: the love of the neighbor. We learned that his demand does not start out from the image of an idyllic and peaceful situation of harmonious relationships, but that this dimension of neighborhood urges the faithful to go beyond the general social conventions and become the neighbor—or *yang sesama*, the same one in solidarity and affection, as the Indonesians say—to the one who is left alone and needs this relationship and compassion.

Today we want to reflect on the life and faith of Christ's whose example has shown us how humankind should truly behave, how humankind should truly feel and act. We read the famous passage from Philipians 2:

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

- (6) who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
- (7) but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
- (8) he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death —
even death on a cross.
- (9) Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
- (10) so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

(11) and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

(Phil. 2:1-11)

This passage is well known, an old psalm or hymn obviously sung already in the oldest Christian congregation. As Paul did not compose it himself but quotes it as a text that already existed, he cannot be considered its author. This means that this hymn is one of the oldest testimonies of the Christian community. Therefore, whenever we search for the original expressions of the Christian faith, this hymn ranks among the first.

It must strike us that some terms, usually considered to be of a philosophical nature, already appear here and thus must have been known to the simple and mostly uneducated members of this very early community. I just want to point to the idea of the pre-existence of the Christ.

Whenever we try to consider its meaning and the way our oldest ancestors in faith understood it, we should not neglect the whole contents of the hymn and the direction Paul's thoughts were taking at the place he quotes it. The idea of pre-existence, and that holds true also for the beginning of the Gospel of John, obviously never came up as a topic for metaphysical speculation, at least not in the beginning of Christianity. It was taken as a given fact. But what was of interest for the believers were its ethical implications.

The pre-existence of Christ is of interest only as part of his biography on earth, albeit its starting point. It points to the divine presence amidst human beings, and describes him as a member of humankind. Thus it does not reflect upon the somewhat enigmatic nature of Jesus the Christ, but it makes his behavior, his attitude and his way of life the center of all considerations. I am inclined to say that this ethical dimension was the only one of importance and interest for the first Christians and their understanding of faith. That is also the reason why the incarnation,

the act through which the *logos* (Word of God) became flesh and did not only appear in (or: as) flesh, is its central point. If real incarnation had not taken place, then the whole history of Christ's appearance among humankind would have remained no more than a spectacle presented by God. Only his becoming one of his human brothers and sisters, of becoming their *yang sesama* (the same one in solidarity and affection) gives meaning to his being with them, because they can only communicate with him on their own level. We have to remember here that humankind has proven its inability to communicate with God as God, because when it did attempt to, humankind wanted to become like God himself, and we know the disaster that followed. Thus, when God wants to communicate again with humankind, he can only do so reasonably on a basis where he, God, becomes a member of humankind. That is why his incarnation must also be a real one and not just a spectacle.

Wherever Christ's pre-existence is mentioned, it is linked to the call to those in touch with him to become his followers, his disciples. "Your attitude should be the same as that of Jesus Christ." Not only approximately like him, because of all of our deficiencies. There are no other restrictions mentioned, but you "... should be the same ..." Not similar only, nor inferior.

This seems to be a strong attack on our nature and feelings, because we are all too easily tempted to take refuge in our weakness. There may be good reason for this attitude. This point, of course, is not alien to Christ and Christian thinking, but it is elaborated on in other places. Here it is stressed that Christ became human in order to enable other human beings to follow him; being himself human, he can show them the way they are able to go. There is no difference between him and them in their humanity, and therefore to point to human weakness in this context is not really convincing but sounds more like an excuse for not following him.

After these preliminary remarks let us now look at Christ's life as it actually unfolded. In short, it was a continuous descent. He rejected power and prestige and freed himself from everything re-

lated to them; this began with his divine pre-existence, his birth among the animals and his social position among mostly lowly people. He did not lead the life of a royal prince, as the men of human wisdom had predicted. It was not an easy life, as is obvious from his continuous quarrels with the leaders of his community. Nor did he lead a bourgeois life, for he mixed with the socially and medically unclean, nor, finally, a respectable life, for he let himself be treated as a political criminal and was executed as an impostor.

His life was characterized by a steady descent and self-sacrifice. Maybe this is why many people feel reluctant to follow this Jesus who was the Christ. His way is one that leads him to ever greater weakness, or even meanness. When we and others invoke our weakness which prevents us from following him, do we really mean weakness? Are we sincere? Rather, is it not that we are reluctant to acknowledge our weakness because we wish to be strong? Isn't our way of thinking much closer to that of Peter who, when he had decided to defend the life and honor of his master, got hold of his sword? It is difficult for us to acknowledge our weakness because we feel that we should not become prey to it. We do not accept to be weak. This rejection of the truth about ourselves leads us into all manners of futile activities meant to prove our strength but which merely reveal our weakness.

This attitude, e.g., to want to be strong, is at stake in Christ's way of life. He shows that this is not his way, nor should it be that of humankind. We may go further and ask, why is it not the way of the human being Jesus Christ to lead his brothers and sisters to strength? In the end, the answer might be: because the path of strength leads humankind into rebellion against the Creator.

From the first pages in the Bible we learn that this path of strength was indeed the way chosen by Adam, by the first human couple and their descendants. They wanted to obtain knowledge, because knowledge means strength; by obtaining knowledge they wanted to become like God. They did obtain

knowledge but at the same time lost God. They thought that they could live without God and replace Him. But by doing so they brought disaster and destruction on themselves and the whole of creation. Life without God means death because only God is the source of life.

Jesus Christ's way is the opposite from that taken by Adam. Instead of trying to cling to heaven he gave it up and came down to earth. Thus he accepts our weakness and teaches us to live with it.

Our hymn describes this attitude when it says that Jesus Christ became a servant. Would anyone wish to be a servant? No one, I presume. Let us also say some words here about Muslims and Islam and their understanding of Christ. Like us, they accept and stress that Jesus is an *'abd Allah*, a servant of God. That is the highest attitude someone may take towards God: to become a real, a truthful and obedient servant of God.

Also from biblical traditions we know that being called a servant of God is the greatest honor a recognized person of faith can achieve. Implied in this term is not only unconditional submission, but more than that, a relationship based on truth and trust.

But would the Qur'an also admit that the Christ—or any other prophet—be named "a servant of humankind"? This is implied in our text, but would not God's servant be made to look too humble by such an expression? In our hymn, Christ's service finally leads him to the cross. We know that the Qur'an rejects the idea of God's messenger having died like this. We may ask—Kenneth Cragg, Anton Wessels and others have asked this question too—whether it is really the Qur'an's intention to refute Christ's death on the cross?

Of course, the traditional interpretations of Sura 4:157 are not covering all aspects of this Qur'anic passage and its literal wording. But let us limit ourselves here to the question, do the Muslim interpreters really take it seriously when they call Christ the *'abd Allah* when, at the same time, they do not really accept

his service to humankind? This service which led him to the final consequence of a life in obedience, the sacrifice of his life itself? What would have been the meaning of his descent if he had stopped *before* the final step, the death inflicted on him by his brothers and sisters? Is it not necessary and consequent to make this final step part of his biography, and by doing this, to give it meaning? Christ renounced everything he possessed in favor of his brothers and sisters. If his life had been spared, then this "everything" would not be really complete, something would be missing. Would that be convincing as the basis of a truth which has its roots in faith?

We learn from our hymn that Christ, who had renounced everything, was given back everything by God, his life, his power and his glory. We have to stress this: God gave all this back to Christ, who had neither demanded anything nor risen to new life and glory by his own power. There is a passage in the Qur'an that narrates how God asks Christ whether it was *he*, Christ, who had taught his disciples to accept him as a token of God's presence, as "the son of God", and quite rightly Christ denies this. Also in the Gospel of Matthew, Christ after Peter's confession, states clearly: *no* human being (including Christ himself) has revealed this knowledge to you, it was the spirit of God himself. I think that when we talk to Muslims we must be quite clear on this point. It is not human wisdom nor insight that leads to the confession that we meet with the living God in the person of Jesus Christ. This confession is solely a gift of God through his Spirit of truth. It is therefore futile to argue about it.

Let me mention one final point: the name given to the Christ. Today, when many people are discussing the many names of God, we cannot omit some remarks about this name which is above all other names. Of course, we cannot deal here with all aspects that have been treated in learned discussions over the past several years. But let us just say this and leave it at that: Already the Bible acknowledges that God revealed himself to humankind under a number of names. Thus the issue of revelation under many names is not a genuine theological problem.

But there was the one name which in later times, out of respect and for fear of misuse, was pronounced no longer, because it opened the way straight into God's heart. This name was replaced by a word of confession and adoration, *adonai*, or *kyrios* (Lord) in the Greek translation; in this word all the other names are contained. Devout Muslims as well know about the 99 most beautiful names of God, but they know too that the word "Allah" as "the 100th name" includes them all. The one name is the culmination of the many names. It reveals the truth and affection that God bestows on his creatures. Hence, it does not point to theoretical matters. According to the Bible, this name is the core of God's attitude towards his creatures, it is love, *agape*. In this name God has revealed himself to humankind, in this name he has himself become human. Neither Hindu nor Buddhist would state that in the *avatars* or *bodhisattvas* God became human. Not unlike the understanding of the Gnostics, they would concede only that God may appear "as" a human being. And it is well known that Islamic teachings deny incarnation.

In this one name, God also shows that his reign and power are characterized by serving and suffering. It was not so that he could begin a new chapter in his activities that Jesus was raised by God to his Lordship. He was enthroned so that he would continue to rule in the attitude he had shown during his stay among his human brothers and sisters, the attitude of submission, humbleness and service. Rule and service are not different stages, they are identical. Jesus Christ as a true example for humankind has shown that human life must not necessarily lead to rebellion against God. By refusing to give way to the temptation of gaining power, glory or admiration as a superhuman being, he was able to restore to those who had been deprived of it a life in the fullest sense of its meaning, i.e., a healthy relationship with God and the neighbors. His own life would lead him to the cross. There he proved that he did indeed not demand anything for himself. And because of that, God knew that with this "Adam" he would not experience the same tribulations and disasters as

with the first Adam. He therefore entrusted everything to this servant who at the end of times would return everything to its owner.

In this respect, Jesus is not merely one among the many examples of the way of truth and of life. His presence has universal meaning, it is not a hidden presence either, because he has given clear examples by his way of life and through his teachings. Therefore it is true and logical that Paul sees this hymn not only as a beautiful reflection on cosmic dramas, but also as an admonition to those who can hear and see (hearing and seeing are clearly human senses, there is nothing enigmatic about them) to become his followers by adopting his own attitude and to become true human beings.

Matthew 28:16-20

During our consultation we very often touched upon the topic of the mission of the church, or of Christians, in the actual Asian or regional context. It may be worthwhile therefore to conclude our Bible studies with some reflections on one of the most outspoken, but also most crucial texts of the New Testament that deal with mission.

When I open my German Bible, the text I mean is found under the heading *Der Missionsbefehl*, mission as a command. I must confess that I never liked commands, and I am not making an exception for this one. But let us read it first as it is written and then advance some thoughts, also on the question of how this text might be interpreted as a command.

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." (Matt. 28:16-20.)

It is the risen Christ who speaks here; with these words he takes leave of his disciples. Thus, the very end of his earthly activities is this message to his disciples. His words are a kind of conclusion and a bequest to his disciples.

But the matter is not as simple as that. Those who looked at this passage from the point of view of textual criticism, stated long ago that these verses were an addition to the original text of this Gospel. One may draw different conclusions from this. One is to say, for instance, that as an addition it has no historical legitimation and that these were not Christ's words but those of later generations and may therefore be disregarded.

This is a very superficial way of arguing, I think, because it merely criticizes the form of these verses and does not take notice of their content. Of course, it is very unlikely that Jesus Christ—the "historical" Jesus Christ—at any time, before or after his crucifixion, ever used the trinitarian formula. But what does this mean with regard to the internal logic and truth of the experiences his disciples had with him, with regard to how they expressed these in later times and related them to God? Not the formulas are important but their spiritual content, and that may be expressed in a variety of terms.

I do not want to elaborate much further on the trinitarian question, but since we are dealing with our relations to Muslims, in which this question is a continuous issue, let me just make a few remarks. The Trinitarian formula, also as it appears in our text, has the character of a confession, not of a dogmatic or philosophical definition. It implies *doxa*, praise, not *dogma*, teaching. As *doxa* it developed from the liturgical confession of faith as practised by the earliest congregation in Jerusalem. Therefore we should not reduce it to a teaching of, or about, Christ. The gospels, by the way, do not bear that character. They do not contain teachings about Christ, but they are doxological witnesses of Christ. Therefore, the truth they contain is not given in the shape of philosophical treatises but in faithful witness to what was experienced earlier. This holds true also for the

Trinitarian formula. Its truth is not confined to its literal formulation, but it rests with the experience of faith which precedes it and expresses itself in these human words with all their human limitations. To argue about them would mean to argue about the experience of faith, and we all know that this is a very futile and foolish entertainment. We should also remember this insight when talking to Muslims about the topic of the Christian faith. Experiences of faith can be told, explained and witnessed. But its final truth can only be accepted or understood by someone who shares the same or similar experiences of faith.

Let us affirm this: Also Christians believe in the One and only God. The trinitarian formula does not imply a numerical multitude, but it points to the different realities as which the divine presence is perceived by the faithful. This understanding was maintained when the early church used the terms of *persona* in Latin, or *prosopon* or *hypostasis* in Greek for these different realities.

Let us return to the main topic of this passage, the topic of mission. The motivation for mission does not depend on our text. Paul dedicated his whole life to mission without knowing this text and probably without knowing the term. The modern Protestant missionary movement began without referring to this text; it was only neo-Pietist missionary movements that picked it up in the middle of the last century. Before that time, the motivation for mission was to be found in other texts and sprang from other aspects of faith. Most of these texts centered on the love that God shows humankind and that must be proclaimed by living a life of love and service and presented to those who had not yet learned about it. The language used in those times may now seem fairly strange and emotional to us, but mission was not based on a command which demanded merely obedience.

Mission sprang from people's own experience of God. It gave them a new meaning of life. To say "a new meaning" is actually not quite true: it is the old meaning of life which God had established with creation and which was lost through humankind's (Adam's) imposture. Therefore, life was given back its real mean-

ing when it was transformed in the light and through the dynamics of the gospel which re-established the original relation between Creator and creature. We know that the old Pietists, apart from their need for an emotional religious life, were very sensitive to ethical and social problems. This was in fact the motivation behind the rise of Pietism and partly also of revivalism, a protest against a rational understanding of faith which forgets that faith is first of all related to life and then only to reasoning.

From Paul's way of doing mission and from the history of how mission was originally perceived by the Protestants, we may draw the conclusion that it was never understood as an imperative, as a command. On the contrary, it grew out of the experience of faith in which the loving, healing and serving God became a reality. And this reality encompassed God's whole creation; this is so simply and overwhelmingly put in the Gospel of John (3:16), where it is said that God's love includes the whole world and is offered to everyone. God's love, his healing and serving are powerful, dynamic forces coming out of his very heart. We know from Islamic theology that the attributes of God's essence or being are not static additions to his nature, but they point to its creative power. The same is true for the biblical understanding of God's attributes. They are dynamic and creative, not limited to a special sector in his creation, but including all of it.

Especially in Protestantism we are dealing much with justification which comes out of God's justice. His justice is not merely a Greek *dikaioσύνη*, a manner of being just in itself, or in himself. God's *dikaioσύνη* is also a power which justifies, which creates justice wherever he is present and at work. The Hebrew term may help us to come to a clearer understanding. *Dikaioσύνη* in Hebrew means *sedāqā*, and this once again is a term of relationship. Abraham was called to live in this *sedāqā*, and the faithful are living in it. Why? Because they live in the relationship with God which was agreed upon when God made his covenant with Abraham, and Abraham accepted it and kept to it. *Sedāqā* means to live faithfully and truthfully in accordance with a treaty

concluded between two partners. This element of faithfulness and truthfulness is also apparent when the Arabs call a true friend a *sadiq*. In the Hebrew tradition, *saddiq* designated someone who was true to the old and sacred religious traditions through which he met God.

Thus, God through love, justice, healing and saving once more establishes his relationship with humankind. This is where we find the motivation for mission. I have already mentioned that God's activity is not restricted to a sector only of his creation. He wants everyone and everything to be restored to the original relationship, that of Creator and creature, a relationship of peace and integrity (as we like to say today). It is a relationship which brings welfare and well-being to every creature without distinction, to all human beings, be they the most despised or despicable, and even to all other creatures in God's household. We must never forget Paul's exclamation in his letter to the Romans, namely that the whole creation is waiting in pain for the salvation of God's children, because only then his suffering, too, will come to an end (Rom. 8:19ff).

From these reflections, I think, it becomes clear that mission cannot be done by merely fulfilling a command. If that were the case, then love, the core of motivation, might not be present. I am sometimes shocked about the way some fundamentalist missionary circles are speaking of their task. Not only does the counting of converts seem to be one of their major activities, but also the pleasure of deciding who will be the most likely candidates for hell. And we know that in their view the Muslims are at the top of the list.

But not hell and the identification of those who will dwell in it should be the concern of mission—simply because we do not believe in the devil. We believe in God, and there is no *sharik* (companion) at his side deserving belief or acknowledgment.

The aim of mission is to spread God's love which does not know commandments. Its work has its own dynamics. Therefore, in a strict sense, it may be somewhat misleading when the well-known

declaration about Mission and *Da'wah*, which came out of a consultation held in Chambésy, Switzerland, in June 1976, formulates that "In recognition that mission and *da'wah* are essential religious duties in both Christianity and Islam . . ." ¹ In Arabic, "religious duties" are understood as *wajib*, based on a divine commandment which is revealed in the scripture or demonstrated by the habits of the Prophet. In an Islamic context this may make sense in so far as it points to the fact that mission, like *da'wah* in Islam, is at the very center of Christian faith and life, and without it Christians would betray the core of their religion. But for Christian theological reflection it must be clear that mission is part of the dynamics of faith and expresses its life, and therefore it emerges by itself and not because of a commandment.

This brings us back to our text. Does Jesus command to do mission? Some interpret the text in this way. Another interpretation is that the risen Christ, being ready to leave his disciples, is making a bequest to them: It is now their task to continue the mission which he has begun, right to the end of all times.

I do not want to dwell on the question of baptism here. Having just come from a visit to China where many unbaptized people confess to be Christians, I think this matter needs to be carefully considered, and quick statements might be lacking in compassion. But wherever the spirit of compassion is wanting, love will be absent as well. On the other hand we know from Paul that he as a missionary did not regard baptizing people as one of his primary occupations. Maybe we have to rethink the meaning of baptism in the light of the history and understanding of our churches, but also with respect to actual experiences.

One final observation about this text. Every time I read it, it strikes me that mission is not to be directed at individuals but at peoples or communities. Christian faith obviously cannot be individualized. It lives in the communion which we confess in our Creed, and which is constituted by God himself through his Holy

¹ *International Review of Mission*, No. 260 (Oct. 1976), p. 457.

Spirit. Therefore the target of mission is to restore this communion which brings new life to its members, and to extend the communion already enjoyed by the disciples to those who are not yet included. Not they as individuals are the target but the communion which is open to everyone. No one may become an object, or target, of mission. God himself chooses individuals as his co-workers, but he wants them to be partners, subjects. And as subjects they are included in the communion from where they are sent out as his fellow workers into his property. That obviously is the present status of God and his journey with his creatures through history, a journey that has begun with Abraham, which includes the strangers and unbeloved neighbors, a communion where the attitude of one member towards the others is exemplified by Christ and his attitude, and a communion which on its journey with God will bring reconciliation, life, welfare and togetherness to the end of this world, and to all who accept the same goal.

(All Bible quotations are taken from the *New Revised Standard Version*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989)



Appendices

MUSLIM POPULATION (provisional)

Country	1990 POP In 1,000	% of MUS POP (1989, as MUS POP per EB) in 1990	% of MUS POP (1980, as (1982, as Annual per NB) per MAX) Increase	% of MUS POP (1980, as (1982, as Annual per NB) per MAX) Increase	Year 2020 Country POP	(EB) MUS POP In 2000	1989 Per Capita GNP (US\$)
AFRICA							
Algeria	25,600	99.1%	99.0%	99.0%	32,700	32,405	2,170
Egypt	54,700	94.1%	90.0%	92.0%	69,000	64,929	630
Libya	4,200	97.0%	98.0%	99.0%	5,600	5,432	5,410
Morocco	25,600	98.7%	97.0%	99.0%	31,400	30,991	900
Sudan	25,200	73.0%	72.0%	90.0%	24,192	24,528	420
Tunisia	8,100	99.4%	92.0%	99.0%	10,001	10,039	1,260
M. Sahara	200	100.0%	90.0%	2.5%	200	200	400
Mauritania	2,000	99.4%	96.0%	100.0%	2,700	2,683	490
Benin	4,700	15.2%	16.0%	40.0%	6,600	1,003	360
Burkina Faso	9,100	43.0%	22.0%	60.0%	12,500	5,375	310
Ivory Coast	12,600	20.0%	25.0%	35.0%	18,500	3,700	790
Gambia	900	95.4%	90.0%	98.0%	1,100	1,049	230
Ghana	15,000	15.7%	19.0%	33.0%	20,400	3,202	360
Guinea	7,300	85.0%	65.0%	85.0%	9,200	7,820	430
Guinea-Bissau	1,000	30.0%	30.0%	70.0%	1,200	360	180
Liberia	2,600	13.8%	359	45.0%	3,700	510	450
Mali	8,100	90.0%	60.0%	90.0%	10,700	9,630	260
Niger	7,900	80.0%	85.0%	90.0%	11,100	8,880	290
Nigeria	118,800	45.0%	53,460	60.0%	160,800	72,360	250
Senegal	7,400	91.0%	82.0%	90.0%	9,700	8,827	650
Sierra Leone	4,200	39.4%	30.0%	60.0%	5,400	2,127	200
Togo	3,700	12.1%	448	25.0%	5,200	629	390
Cameroon	11,100	22.0%	2,442	60.0%	14,500	3,190	1,010
Central African Rep	2,900	5.9%	171	40.0%	3,700	218	390
Chad	5,000	44.0%	2,200	80.0%	6,200	2,728	190

Comoros	500	99.7%	499	99.0%	3.0%	600	598	1,000	460
Djibouti	400	94.0%	376	94.0%	100.0%	600	564	1,000	
Ethiopia	51,700	31.4%	16,234	40.0%	60.0%	70,800	22,231	126,000	120
Kenya	24,600	6.0%	1,476	30.0%	30.0%	35,100	2,106	60,500	380
Malawi	9,200	16.2%	1,490	40.0%	3.4%	11,800	1,811	22,000	180
Mauritius	1,100	13.0%	143	20.0%	1.4%	1,200	156	1,300	1,950
Mozambique	15,700	13.0%	2,072	45.0%	2.7%	20,400	2,692	31,900	30
Somalia	8,400	99.8%	8,383	99.0%	100.0%	10,400	10,379	18,700	170
Tanzania	26,000	33.0%	8,580	27.0%	55.0%	36,500	7,409	68,800	120
ASIA									
Bahrain	500	85.0%	425	95.0%	90.0%	700	595	1,000	6,360
Cyprus	700	23.0%	161	18.0%	24.4%	800	184	900	7,050
Gaza	600	99.0%	594		4.4%	800	792	1,400	
West Bank	1,100	80.0%	880	-- Palest	44.0%	1,685	1,348	2,400	
Israel	4,600	13.9%	639	10.0%	1.6%	5,400	750	7,000	9,750
Iraq	18,800	95.8%	18,010	95.0%	97.0%	27,200	26,057	50,900	
Jordan	4,100	93.0%	3,813	93.0%	95.0%	5,700	5,301	9,700	1,730
Kuwait	2,100	91.5%	1,922	97.0%	90.0%	2,900	2,653	4,600	13,680
Lebanon	3,300	53.0%	1,749	51.0%	65.0%	4,100	2,173	5,800	
Oman	1,500	86.0%	1,290	100.0%	99.0%	2,100	1,806	3,800	5,220
Qatar	500	92.4%	462	100.0%	95.0%	700	646	1,100	9,920
Saudi Arabia	15,000	98.8%	14,320	99.0%	95.0%	22,000	21,736	42,200	6,230
Syria	12,600	39.6%	11,290	37.0%	85.0%	18,000	16,128	32,600	1,020
Turkey	56,700	99.2%	56,246	98.0%	99.0%	69,000	67,620	93,800	1,360
United Arab Emirates	1,600	94.4%	1,510	92.0%	90.0%	2,000	1,388	2,600	18,430
Yemen	9,800	99.5%	9,751	99.0%	100.0%	13,600	13,532	25,900	640
Iran	55,600	98.8%	54,933	98.0%	99.0%	75,700	74,186	130,200	
Afghanistan	15,900	99.0%	15,741	99.0%	100.0%	25,400	25,146	43,000	
Bangladesh	114,800	86.6%	99,417	85.0%	85.0%	146,600	124,610	201,400	180
India	853,400	11.3%	96,434	11.0%	12.0%	1,042,500	114,675	1,374,500	350
Maldives	200	100.0%	200	99.0%	100.0%	300	300	600	420
Pakistan	114,600	96.7%	110,818	97.0%	97.0%	149,100	144,627	251,300	370
Sri Lanka	17,200	7.6%	1,307	10.0%	7.6%	19,400	1,474	24,000	430
Malaysia	17,900	52.9%	9,469	50.0%	5.0%	21,500	1,373	27,300	2,130
Singapore	2,700	16.0%	432	15.0%	17.0%	3,000	480	3,400	10,450
Brunei	300	63.4%	190	60.0%	70.0%	300	190	400	14,120
Indonesia	180,763	86.9%	157,083	85.0%	90.0%	214,410	186,322	287,300	490
Thailand	55,700	4.2%	2,339		12.0%	63,700	2,675	76,100	1,170

MUSLIM POPULATION (provisional)

Country	1990 POP in 1,000	% of MUS POP (1989, as MUS POP per EB) in 1990	% of MUS POP per NB) per MAK)	% of MUS POP Natural Increase	Year 2000 Country POP	(EB) MUS POP in 2000	1989 Per Capita GDP (US\$)
EUROPE							
Yugoslavia	23,800	10.4%	19.0%	21.5%	5,100	2,610	2,490
Albania	3,300	20.5%	70.0%	75.0%	2,660	779	4,700
Bulgaria	8,900	7.5%	11.0%	19.3%	9,000	675	2,320
Soviet Union	291,000	11.9%	34.629	16.5%	312,000	39,128	355,000
China	1,119,900	2.4%	26,878	10.5%	1,280,000	30,420	1,496,300
United States	251,400	1.9%	4,726	1.3%	268,300	5,044	21,100
Suriname	400	19.6%	78	35.0%	500	38	3,020

SUMMARY

WORLD (4)	5,321,000	1.8%	6,292,000	8,228,000	3,470
MUSLIM POP. (EB)	18.7%	998,763		1,176,604	
MUSLIM POP. (DB)		924,611	17.8%	1,119,976	
MUSLIM POP. (MAK)		1,330,220	25.0%	1,573,000	
MUSLIM POP. (R.E. Miller et. of 19%)		1,010,990		1,195,480	

1. EB is 1990 Encyclopaedia Britannica Annual for mid - 1989 statistics, a compilation of several sources including Barrett.

2. DB is David Barrett, World Christian Encyclopedia
NC, which replaces DB in the country statistics, is National Geographic

3. MAK is Muslim Minorities in the World Today (London: Mansell, 1986), a Muslim source.

4. World and Country statistics are from 1990 World Population Data Sheet (Washington Population Reference Bureau Inc., 1990)

(Provisional statistics compiled by Prof. R. E. Miller, University of Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, soon to be published in a book provisionally entitled: The Faith and Feeling of a Muslim Friend.)

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